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Nick Carter Stories

THE MYSTERY of the CROSSED NEEDLES

OR Nick Carter and the Yellow Tong

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The Mystery of the Crossed Needles;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE YELLOW TONG.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

TWICE IN THE HEART.

The electric bell from Andrew Anderton's study rang sharply. It was close to the ear of the butler dozing in his little room off the hall at the back of the main staircase, and he awoke with a start.

"Lord love 'im!" exclaimed that functionary, stalking to the door with as much haste as his dignity would permit. "Why doesn't 'e stop ringing? I 'eard 'im the first time, without 'im keeping the blooming bell going all the time." Then, as he reached the door and made for the stairs, he continued grumblingly: "All right, Mr. Anderton. I 'ear you. You certainly are a most impatient gentleman. I never seed anything like you for 'urrying a man, not even in the old country. Though the Marquis of Silsby—my last master before I left England—was a 'asty sort of gentleman, too. This was the way 'e always acted. Wanted me to be right on the spot as soon as he touched the bell, although 'e knew very well I was two floors below 'im. My word! That bell's still ringing. I can 'ear it from up 'ere."

The butler, by this time, was on the second floor of the handsome house in upper Fifth Avenue, where Andrew Anderton, the millionaire traveler and Oriental student, lived. He pushed open the door of the study.

"Did you ring, sir?"

He had these words out, from force of habit, before he even looked around the room. When he did, he gave utterance to a shout that brought a maid, who had been passing along the hallway, surging in, white-faced and round-eyed, to see what was the matter.

Andrew Anderton, in the handsome, velvet, embroidered dressing gown he generally wore when alone in his study, was lying across the floor, face down. His body, pressed on the electric foot button, kept the bell below ringing continuously.

"What's the matter with him, Ruggins?" whispered the maid.

The butler knelt by the side of the still figure and gently turned it over. The face of the student was white—the awful gray white of a corpse—and the eyes were closed. The expression was peaceful. There was nothing in it to suggest that he had died a violent death, or even that he had suffered as he passed away.

"Heart disease, I should say," murmured Ruggins. "Telephone for Doctor Miles, Amelia."

The girl took up the desk telephone on the large, heavy table that Andrew Anderton had been writing at when stricken, and called up Doctor Theophilus Miles, who had been a lifelong friend of the dead man, as well as his physician.

As she telephoned she pointed mutely to a pen that evidently had dropped from the fingers of the master at the moment of his collapse, for it was still wet with black ink, and there was a smudge of it on the white paper of the letter he had been inditing.

"Yes, I see," nodded Ruggins. "It was awfully sudden. 'E must 'ave been took all at once. I wonder whether it *was* 'eart disease, after all."

He opened the front of the velvet dressing gown—which was not fastened, but had fallen together—and gave vent to a mumbled ejaculation, as he saw that the waistcoat was open.

"And 'is shirt is the same way," he went on. "You can see 'is bare flesh. 'Ello! What's this?"

Something glittering had caught his eye. A closer look revealed two long needles, crossed and welded together in the center, where they were in contact with each other.

"Save us!" muttered the butler. "This is murder!"

The points of both needles were deeply embedded in the flesh on the left side, and Ruggins knew at once that they pierced the heart!

His first impulse was to pull the needles away. Then some vague recollection of something he had heard about the illegality of touching a body until it had been viewed by a coroner held his hand.

"I'll wait till the doctor comes, anyhow. My poor master's dead. It wouldn't do 'im any good to take out the needles. 'Ave you got the doctor, Amelia?"

"Yes. He will be here in five minutes. His automobile is all ready at his door, and he will come right along."

It was less than five minutes when Doctor Theophilus Miles—a rather gruff, although good-natured, man of sixty—came into the room, and, with a nod to Ruggins, knelt by the side of the stiffened form upon the floor. He opened one of the eyes with a calm, professional finger, felt for a pulse, and then pulled aside the dressing gown to put his hand over the heart.

He started as he saw the needles. Carefully he pulled them out, gazed at them in silence for nearly a minute. Then he told Ruggins and the maid to go out of the room.

"And don't say anything about what has happened in this room to the other people in the house until I tell you. If they have found out anything, tell them Mr. Anderton is sick. Understand? And, whatever you do, don't mention these needles."

"Don't you want any 'elp, sir?" asked Ruggins, who did not like to be thus dismissed.

"I'll get all the help I want in a few minutes. I'm going to telephone for it. A gentleman will come here soon—probably in less than a quarter of an hour. If he says his name is Carter—Mr. Nicholas Carter—bring him up at once. That's all."

He waved them both from the room. Then he shut the door and took up the telephone. Soon he had a response to the number he had called, and he asked whether Mr. Carter was on the wire. A reply came, and he went on:

"Oh, all right, Carter! This is Andrew Anderton's house. You know where it is. Can you come at once? . . . Yes, very important. . . . You will? Ten minutes? All right! I'll wait for you."

As he hung up the receiver, he soliloquized: "That's one good thing about Carter. He doesn't bother you with a lot of questions over the telephone. He knew that if I had anything to tell I would have said it. I wish everybody I have to deal with was like that. I'd have a much easier life. So they got him! The Yellow Tong! This is the second time I've seen their work. I believe some of those people on the Yellow Sea must get their devilish ingenuity from the Evil One himself."

He had placed the crossed needles on the white letter paper, which had only the date line written upon it, and covered the face of Anderton with a newspaper. Now he sat down in the big swing chair from which the stricken man had fallen, to stare at the needles.

Soon he dropped into a doze, for he was a busy man, with a practice that kept him out a large part of his time, and his sleep was a thing he had to take when he could get it. He had acquired the ability to drop off anywhere so long as he could sit down, and a short nap always did him good.

He was brought to himself by the announcement of Ruggins, at the door, as he ushered in a visitor:

"Mr. Carter!"

The great detective looked at the doctor—who jumped from his chair, wide awake, at the first sound of the butler's voice—and then glanced at the figure stretched across the floor, with a newspaper over the face. A frown drew his heavy brows together. He stooped and removed the newspaper.

"Poor Anderton!" he murmured. "Ah, well! I'm not surprised. How was it, doctor?"

For answer, Doctor Miles pointed to the white paper on the table.

"The crossed needles!" whispered the detective, in an awed tone. Then, sternly: "The Yellow Tong is at it again. This is the second."

"Yes, Carter. The other one was that poor hobo they got in a Bowery lodging house. It was the same thing, you remember. But I was coroner at that time, and I believed the ends of justice would be served by not letting any one know what I found inside his shirt. I have those crossed needles locked up in my laboratory now."

"You've examined them, haven't you?" asked Nick Carter.

"Of course. They are poisoned. Not that *that* is necessary," replied the doctor. "When an inch of steel pierces the heart in two places, it is quite likely to prove fatal, without introducing poison. Still, the poison hurries the crime. Of course, when a victim dies on the instant, as he does with these needles, it may save the murderer some inconvenience. Poor Anderton! This is the penalty he pays for falling foul of the tong."

"Will there be an inquest?" asked Nick quietly. "Or can you avoid it by certifying that he died of natural causes? I suppose you couldn't do that—although, in one sense, he did die that way. It is quite natural for a human being to pass away when two poisoned needles are in his heart," he added, in a thoughtful tone.

"That's good logic, Nick," admitted the doctor, with a slight smile. "But it wouldn't do. In cases of sudden death, there must be an inquiry by the proper officer. But I can keep the crossed needles out of sight. I will cause the inquest to be entirely perfunctory, by certifying that poor Anderton came to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown, without going too much into details. It will be passed up to the police, of course, and I shall have to show the weapon to the man in charge of the case from headquarters. But I can prevent its going any further."

"That's what I want," answered Carter. "You know, as well as I, that this rascally gang from China, who call themselves the Yellow Tong, intend to fairly honeycomb this country with secret avenues for bringing in their people, if they can, and that, when they are ready, they will commence a series of crimes that will give the government, as well as the police of all the big cities, more trouble than the average citizen dreams of as possible."

"Yes, I know that," agreed Miles.

"Poor Anderton was a warm, personal friend of mine," said Nick Carter, with a sobbing catch in his voice, "just as he was of yours. If I haven't expressed much grief since coming into this room, it is because I feel that it is more important to avenge him than to mourn over his remains."

Doctor Miles put out his hand and grasped the firm, strong fingers of the detective.

"I know you, Carter," he returned. "You need not explain."

"There is more than that," went on Nick. "This is the first serious blow they have struck. I don't count the poor fellow in the Bowery so much, because he was an unimportant person. If he had never accidentally come across some of their secrets in China, when he was a seaman on board that tramp steamer, they never would have troubled to wipe him out. But Andrew Anderton is different.

"Yes, of course. He is a member of several scientific associations, a wealthy New Yorker, and he has the confidence of the United States government. He has done notable work in China for Washington, and I have no doubt he has submitted a valuable report to the department of state, with papers to verify it, that no other man could have given to it. It is because he is so well informed a man that he has been cut off by the Yellow Tong. There can be no doubt about that."

"Not the slightest," assented Nick Carter. "By the way, can you have this room fastened up, so that there is no danger of anybody disturbing it? I should like to go through it alone after the coroner has been here."

"I'll fix that, of course," was the doctor's ready promise. "The coroner is Doctor Farrell. I'll call him up and get him to make his preliminary investigation right away. When do you want to come back?"

"Let me see," answered Nick, consulting his watch. "It is now nearly nine. I'll come back at ten. The coroner will be through by that time?"

"Long before," replied Miles confidently. "I will be here with him, to tell him all he wants to know. He'll bring a jury with him in the morning, and they'll reach a verdict very soon. Do you want me here when you get back at ten?"

"Not unless it is convenient to you. I should like to have you present, of course. But, if you——"

"I've got half a dozen calls I ought to make tonight. I shall try to cover some by telephone. But, anyhow, I have enough to keep me out of bed till one in the morning, and I'm rather tired."

"Don't say a word," interrupted Nick. "I'll look through the room by myself. I shan't even bring my assistant with me. Good night, if you are not here when I come back."

They shook hands again—for each respected the ability and sterling qualities of the other—and Nick Carter went out.

The detective was sharp-eyed, and it was seldom that any detail escaped him. But he did not see an ugly yellow face, with black, oblique-set eyes, in the narrow slit between the heavy brocaded curtains that covered one of the windows. Yet that yellow face had been there from the first—even when Ruggins was involuntarily summoned by the murdered man when he fell from his chair with the crossed needles in his heart.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN WITH THE SCARS.

When Nick Carter went out of the home of Andrew Anderton, he stood for a moment in the shadow of the front entrance, looking sharply about him. Particularly his gaze rested upon the blackness of the park on the opposite side of the avenue, and he tried to make out whether anybody might be lurking in the deep obscurity of the shade trees.

It was his experience, as a detective, that where there had been an unusual crime committed, some of those concerned were pretty sure to linger in the vicinity. Always they were anxious to know what direction suspicion would take.

"I believe I see something moving over there," muttered Nick.

With an abrupt turn to the left, as he walked off the stone steps of the mansion, it seemed as if he were going to make his way on foot down the avenue, notwithstanding that a taxicab was waiting for him half a block up the thoroughfare. But this was only a ruse. As he got to a dark spot, where big trees overshadowed the roadway, he suddenly darted across to the other side.

"I thought so," he remarked, behind his closed teeth. "But he's inside the park railings. By the time I got to a gate he'd be far away, and the fence is too high to climb over—unless there were an absolute necessity. Even if I were to climb, it would take me too long to get that fellow."

Nick Carter continued his stroll toward downtown, in the hope of deceiving the watcher, whoever he might be. Then, swinging around, he ran back. So sudden was this move, that he actually got to the railings and found himself close to the eavesdropper before the latter had time to get away.

As the detective reached the spot, he turned on a strong white light from his electric flash lamp, full on the lurking figure inside the park.

He saw a man in the blue blouse, loose trousers, and felt-soled slippers of an ordinary Chinese laundryman. But he could not see the man's face. It was obscured by the shrubbery, and the fellow was cunning enough to keep it there while the light was turned on him.

"Who are you?" demanded the detective sharply, in the Chinese tongue.

The man was taken aback at hearing a Caucasian address him in his own language, and he blurted out a Mongolian oath of dismay.

Nick Carter took no notice of this—although he understood its purport well enough. Instead, he asked the Chinaman if his name wasn't Pon Gee. This was the first name that came to his tongue, and he merely wanted to get the fellow into conversation.

But the wiles of the Chinese coolie have been proverbial ever since—and before—Bret Harte wrote his famous poem. The man did not reply. He put up one arm, so that the long, hanging sleeve of his blouse completely covered his face, and ran away into the blackness.

Nick Carter could not follow him with the light, and he knew it would be waste of time to hunt in the park for such an elusive object as a Chinese laundryman. So he shut off his flash and walked thoughtfully across the road to his waiting taxi.

"I knew it was the work of the crossed-needles gang, anyhow," he reflected. "That fellow was only a lookout. The Yellow Tong has hundreds of such men in New York—fellows who do not understand what they are doing for the organization, or why. He was told to watch Anderton's house, of course, and to report if the murderers of my poor friend were interfered with. Poor Anderton! He was too good a man to be done to death in that ghastly fashion."

Andrew Anderton was a bachelor. He never had had

time for marriage, he said. His explorations in foreign countries would not have fitted well into married life, either. So he had lived his own life in his own way, and, being a wealthy man, had been able to go where he would, and study with every advantage at his finger ends.

"I waited for you, Mr. Carter," remarked the driver of the taxi, as the detective stepped in. "I knowed you'd want to go home some time. Where to, now?"

"Home!" replied the detective laconically.

This taxi driver was a man who often was employed by Nick Carter, and who never made any comment on what he might see or hear. The detective had many such assistants about New York. More than once this particular driver had helped him out of a tight place, by putting on speed, without asking questions, and without delay. Incidentally, it may be explained that he was always well paid for his services.

Once in his own comfortable library on the second floor of his Madison Avenue home, Carter told his principal assistant, Chick, to give him volume ten of the "International Records."

"Anything on, chief?" asked Chick, as he brought out the book from the steel-lined, fireproof closet. "I heard what you said at this end of the telephone, you know."

Chick was an alert young man, and was so thoroughly in the confidence of the great detective that he was privileged to ask this kind of question.

"I was called to Andrew Anderton's house by Doctor Miles," replied Nick, opening the book and turning to a certain page. "Mr. Anderton is dead."

Chick started and an expression of mingled sorrow and horror came into his face. But he said nothing, and Nick Carter continued:

"He was killed by the Yellow Tong."

"The crossed needles?" gasped Chick.

"Exactly. He was found dead just as that man was in the lodging house. What was his name? Brand—something or other."

"Brand Jamieson," supplied Chick. "He had been a deck hand on a tramp steamer in the China trade, and found out too much about the tong. But Mr. Anderton? How did they get at him? He never goes out without somebody with him, and he has enough people in his house to keep strangers away from him."

"All that is true enough, Chick," returned Carter. "But the men in the Yellow Tong are not ordinary rascals. They have some of the brightest minds in the world among them. You know something about the Chinese, Chick. You have been with me on more than one case among those people. They are not fools, whatever else may be said against some of them."

"Fools?" ejaculated Chick. "I should say not! I'd back a chink—especially an educated one—against any other citizen on this round earth, when it comes to plain, natural smartness—and cussedness."

"Here it is," broke in Nick Carter, running his finger down the close typewriting on the page he had picked out in the large volume. "'Yellow Tong. Death method—crossed needles. Poisoned. Poison a secret mineral, brought from the country bordering on the Yellow Sea. Very deadly. Object of tong—to establish gigantic criminal and political organization in United States, which may eventually even terrorize American government.'"

"Gee!" broke in another voice. "That's great hokum. As if chinks had any show to pull off such a scheme as that."

"Never mind, Patsy!" said Nick. "We won't question whether they can do it. We'll only take care they don't."

It was Patsy Garvan, Nick Carter's second assistant, whom he addressed. Patsy had been in the room all the time, but he had been busy at his particular desk, and the detective had not disturbed him. The young man was entirely in the confidence of his chief, however, and Nick was quite ready to answer any questions he might put.

"Andrew Anderton killed," murmured Chick. "It seems impossible. Why, it was only two days ago that I went up there to see him about this Yellow Tong, and he laughed at the bare idea that he was in danger from the organization."

"Anderton was a brave man," commented Nick Carter.

"Three parts grit, and the rest of him nerve," added Patsy.

"If we could only get our hands on Sang Tu," mused Chick, half aloud. "That fellow is as slippery as a greased pigtail."

"He is in New York, I know," declared Nick. "I have no doubt he was close behind this murder of Anderton. But nobody has seen him here. The last glimpse of him I had was at Shanghai, and then only for a moment. He was coming to America then, I feel sure, but I never was able to trace him."

"That's proof enough that he's a smooth guy,'" interjected Patsy soberly. "If he hadn't been slicker than most men, he wouldn't have got away from you then."

"Well, there's nothing more to be said just now. "But I want you two to get to work on this case."

"Good enough." ejaculated Patsy, grinning his delight. "What am I to do, chief?"

"Find me a laundryman with a burned finger on his right hand and a white scar on his right ear. Looks as if he had been burned at some time. That is all the help I can give you, except that the man is middle size, and I should judge him to be about thirty years old, from his shape and movements. I did not see his face."

"You've told me enough," responded Patsy. "I reckon I'd better put on some clothes that will make the chinks think I'm all right. I don't know whether I can make a good Chinaman of myself."

"It isn't necessary," answered Nick Carter. "A Chinese disguise is always difficult, especially when you want to deceive Chinamen with it. They are very likely to see through it, unless you are in a rather dark place. You can put on a rather shabby suit of clothes of a sporting cut, and wear a soft hat pulled well down—the sort of hat most young men are wearing just now. The idea is that you are a gangster, and are used to going among Chinamen."

"I get you," interrupted Patsy. "I'll show up some time in the morning, and I hope I'll know where this chink is that you want. Got his name?"

"No. If I had, he would be easy to find, and I might not have to send you at all."

"That's so," acknowledged Patsy, as he left the room.

"Now, Chick," went on Nick, when the door had been closed, "I'm going to look through Andrew Anderton's room. You come with me to the house, talk to the butler, and tell him he is to show you all about the

premises. At least—no, you needn't do that. I'll tell him. His name is Ruggins. He was the person who found Mr. Anderton dead. Come on."

The taxicab in which Nick had come home was waiting in front of the house. In less than fifteen minutes it had carried Nick Carter and Chick to Andrew Anderton's house, and both were inside. The taxicab went away.

"Is Doctor Miles here?" was the detective's first question, when Ruggins met him at the door.

"No, sir. 'E waited till the coroner came, and then the doctor went, after showing 'im the body of Mr. Anderton."

"You mean, after showing the coroner?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Anderton 'as been taken out of the study, sir, and 'e's lying on his own bed. The coroner 'ad that done. The inquest will be 'eld in the morning, sir."

"Very well. I'm going to the study. See that I'm not disturbed."

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, yes. Wait a moment. You know me, don't you?"

"Certainly, sir. "You're Mr. Carter, the detective—one of those gentlemen from Scotland Yard. I mean, the New York Scotland Yard."

"Well," continued Nick, smiling slightly at Ruggins' explanation. "This is Mr. Chickering Carter, my assistant. You will let him go where he wants to in the house, and you will show him anything he may ask to see. Also, answer his questions. We are trying to find the murderer of Mr. Anderton."

"I 'opes you'll do it, sir," was Ruggins' fervent response, as Nick Carter went upstairs to the study.

CHAPTER III.

TRACING THE CRIME.

When Nick Carter had closed and locked the door of the study, he went to the table and turned up the green-shaded student lamp on the table. There were electric-light fixtures in the room, but Anderton had always preferred the softer light of an oil lamp when he was at work, or to read by.

The green shade kept the room in gloom except for the round space on the table illuminated by the lamp, and Nick switched on one of the incandescent lights.

"I'm not surprised that nothing seems to have been disturbed," he murmured. "The men who were smart enough to get in here and put Anderton to death by the crossed needles would not be likely to leave obvious traces of their presence. Well, I'll look into that later. First of all, let's see whom poor Anderton was writing to when he was killed."

Passing over the blank sheet, with only the date line, which lay immediately in front of the chair, Nick picked up another letter, sealed, addressed, and stamped. Evidently it had been finished just before the deceased had begun the other.

"'Matthew Bentham, esquire,'" read Carter, with the envelope in his hand. "Ah! That's the scientist and Orientalist. I did not know that he was a friend of Anderton's. But it is quite natural that men having the same interests should be acquainted. I see Bentham lives in Brooklyn. I'll take down that address."

It was in an avenue near Prospect Park, and Nick carefully copied the superscription into his notebook. Then he opened the door of the study and called down the staircase to the butler Ruggins.

"Ask Mr. Chickering Carter to come here," requested Nick.

In a moment Chick was bounding up the stairs. His chief handed him the letter addressed to Bentham.

"Mail this at once, Chick. You'd better take it to the nearest branch post office. I wouldn't trust it to a mail box outside. I want to make sure it will be delivered in the morning."

When Chick had departed with the letter, Nick again closed and locked the door and began his investigations in earnest. Turning on all the electric lights, and with his flash lamp in his hand, he examined the floor, in the hope of finding marks of feet on the polished floor or the costly rugs that would give him a clew.

"Ah, here is something!" he exclaimed, in a low tone. "But it only confirms what I already knew—that a Chinaman killed Anderton. Still, I did not know until now that the fellow wore the regular Chinese felt-soled slippers. This proves it, however."

He was holding the light of his flash upon a certain spot on one of the dark-green rugs, and he could trace the shape of a broad foot—perfectly flat, without any gap for the instep that would be made by an ordinary heeled shoe—outlined in a gray dust. The dust was very indistinct, and if the detective had not had such a strong light to help him, he might have overlooked it altogether.

"Wood ash, I think."

He wetted a finger, pressed it into the gray footprint, and put the finger into his mouth. It was salty.

"That's what it is," he muttered. "Ah, of course! From the fireplace. Anderton always would have a wood fire burning in his room, no matter what the weather might be."

Indeed, there was a large, handsome fireplace, wide and high, with two great brass andirons, or firedogs, at one side of the spacious room. On the andirons were two logs of wood, half burned through, and the gray ash from them was scattered over the tiled hearth.

Nick Carter inspected the hearth carefully, and at last found a slight impression of a foot which was apparently that which had made the mark on the rug.

"He couldn't have come down the chimney to get into the room," he decided, after a glance upward. "It would be too hot. This fire is not as large as it was when Anderton was sitting here. No one could come down this way. But the foot? Why?"

He made a closer inspection, and then laughed at himself, as if ashamed of his own want of perspicuity.

"This foot is straight across the hearth, parallel with the fire. I see how it was. The man was walking past the fireplace, and accidentally one of his feet trod upon the ashes. Well, that is good, so far as it goes. It tells me where he was, and also the kind of footwear he had. But he didn't come in by way of this flue, wide as it is."

The room was at the back of the house, and heavy curtains were drawn over the windows. Nick Carter flung one of the curtains aside and peered out. He saw that there was a long balcony outside, which passed both windows, and he knew it had been arranged thus for a fire escape.

It was not like the ordinary contrivance of that kind, such as is seen on apartment houses and some business buildings.

It had been built by the owner of the house, and was of an ornate description, with no ladder leading to the ground. Instead, there was a rope ladder, with steel crosspieces, which could be let down if desired. The ladder was out of reach of any burglar who might get to the back of the premises and seek to get in by way of the study window.

The windows were both fastened with spring catches. These fastenings were heavy and of modern pattern. But Nick Carter smiled sadly, as he reflected how easy it would be for a professional cracksman to negotiate them. A thin-bladed knife would be the only tool required. The fellow who had murdered Anderton may not have been a professional burglar, but assuredly he would be ingenious enough to get one of these windows open, and close it again when he had finished his work.

The detective, flash lamp in hand, stepped out on the balcony. The floor was of painted steel, and solid. Most fire escapes have a railed floor, but this had been put up under the eye of the dead man, and he wanted it like the floor of a room.

Directing the strong, white light of his lamp on the floor of the balcony, Nick Carter did not discover anything that would help him for the first few minutes. Suddenly a low ejaculation of satisfaction escaped him.

"By George! Here it is! But what does it mean?"

He had found a slight smudge of wood ash at the very end of the balcony. It was so small that it might easily have been overlooked by any but the sharpest eyes. Even the detective had passed it over several times.

He knelt down and put the light close to it. Beyond question, there was a gray-white mark, but it bore nothing of the shape of a human foot.

"Well, I'll have to try something else."

He took from his pocket a powerful magnifying glass, and, adjusting the light properly, again stared hard at the ash mark. This time he was rewarded for his patience by a discovery. Clearly defined, was the shape of a foot. In the one place where the smudge was pronounced, as well as around it, the detective made out the impress. It was very indistinct over most of its area, but certainly was there, now that he had the magnifier to help him.

"So far, good! But how did he get up here, and again, how did he get away. If he didn't get up from the ground below the balcony, which way did he come?"

Nick Carter still held his magnifying glass and flash in his fingers, as he reflected, his gaze fell upon the top of the railing at the end of the balcony.

"I see now, I believe!" he murmured.

The flash had thrown its light upon the railing, and quickly he brought his glass into play at the same spot. A smile of satisfaction spread over his keen features, and he carefully looked all along the railing.

"He stood on this railing. But apparently with only one foot. What does that mean? Where did he go? How did he get here? Hello! What are these splinters of wood? There has been a plank laid on the railing. Yes, here is some of the paint scraped off."

He turned off his flash, and stood in the darkness, considering. The voice of Chick came from below:

"Hello, chief! Are you there?"

"Yes," answered Nick guardedly. "What have you found?"

"Nothing much. But it may have something to do with the case that the next house to this is empty. The people who live here are away—gone to California for two months. Went a week ago. Ruggins told me."

"Ruggins? Oh, yes—the butler. Well? Has anybody been seen in the house since the family went? I suppose there is a caretaker?"

"Yes. There is an old man who lives there by himself. But he hasn't been seen for three days. That's what I wanted to tell you."

"Any lights in the house?"

"Yes. The light in the room the old man uses, in the basement, has been going to-night. Before that it was dark. Now it is dark again."

"Come up here, Chick, to the study. I'll open the door."

Nick Carter went through the window, carefully closing it and pulling the heavy curtains back into place. Then he opened the door, and, as soon as Chick was inside, closed it again.

"The servants are kind of scared," said Chick. "But I think that is only because they know Mr. Anderton is lying dead in his bedroom. Only Ruggins and one of the maids know he was killed, and they are keeping their mouths shut."

"I hope they are," remarked Nick coldly.

"You can depend on that. Ruggins is a close-mouthed fellow, and he has the girl hypnotized, I think. She has an idea he is the greatest ever, and he can make her do anything. I heard some of the other maids talking about Ruggins and Amelia going to be married next spring."

Nick Carter smiled at this story of romance, which he regarded as a lucky thing, if it would have the effect of keeping the maid from talking. But he made no comment. He only asked Chick how he had found out about the house next door.

"Ruggins told me," replied Chick. "Oh, yes. And he said something else. There is a tall Japanese professor, who used to visit there sometimes."

"How do you know he was Japanese?" interrupted Nick.

"Ruggins. He said so. I told him Japanese men were not generally tall. He came back at me by saying this one was, so there was nothing more to be said. The professor's name is Tolo. That's all Ruggins could tell me—Professor Tolo."

There came a knock at the door at that moment, and Chick, at Nick Carter's request, opened it. He confronted Ruggins, who had come up with a card in his hand.

"Gentleman would like to speak to Mr. Carter," he announced.

Nick looked at the name on the card. Then he started, as he told Ruggins to send the gentleman up.

"Chick," he whispered, when the butler had gone. "Who do you think this is, wants to see me?"

"I don't know. Who?" asked Chick.

"Professor Tolo," was Nick Carter's unexpected reply.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEEDLES AGAIN.

The man who came into the room, bowing low and smiling with the suave courtesy of the Oriental, was more than six feet in height, but not stout. He looked as if he might have a great deal of strength in his wiry frame, and his high forehead, which showed extensively under the narrow-brimmed felt hat he wore far back on his head, was that of an intellectual man. The color of his skin suggested that he might be a Japanese. This was confirmed by his wiry black hair.

He appeared to have very sharp black eyes, but Nick Carter could not see them very well, because they were behind large, thick glasses, with heavy, tortoise-shell frames.

"I must ask your pardon for intruding, Mr. Carter," began Professor Tolo. "But Mr. Anderton was a warm friend of mine, and I have just heard that he is seriously ill."

"He is dead," returned Nick simply.

Professor Tolo threw up both hands with a gesture of horror and sorrow. As he did so, Nick Carter noted the powerful sinews of his arms, which could be seen up his sleeves, moving like snakes under the yellow skin.

"Dead?" repeated Tolo. "Why, this is dreadful! How was it? Did you hear? Wasn't it very sudden?"

"Very," returned Nick. "It was an affection of the heart."

"Heart failure! Well, I always thought my poor friend has something of the appearance of one who might be carried off in that way. Can I see him?"

"I am afraid not, professor. The coroner has his remains in charge. When did you see Mr. Anderton last?"

"About a week ago. We met at the home of a friend of both of us. I had never been in this house. You know, he only lately returned from China. He had gathered up there a mass of valuable information for this government, I understand."

"I don't know anything about that," said Nick shortly.

"I have heard so. In fact, Mr. Anderton made no secret of it. He even told me where he kept the data he had gathered, and offered to let me look it over. Part of my reason for being in this neighborhood now was to see Mr. Anderton and ask him to show me those records."

"It is eleven o'clock at night," the detective reminded him. "Isn't it rather late to come on such a mission?"

"It was the habit of Mr. Anderton to work at night, and I have often met him away from home at a later hour than this. Students pay little attention to the time of day or night when they are interested in any subject they may be discussing. Did Mr. Anderton leave those papers where they could be seen, I wonder. They deal only with scientific subjects, of course."

"Did I not understand you to say that they were intended for the government?" asked Nick. "It would hardly be proper for anybody else to see them, I should say."

"They were to be sent to the Smithsonian Institute, I believe. But I was told by Mr. Anderton himself that there was nothing secret about them. He intended the facts he had gathered to be given to the world at large. My understanding was that they were to be published simultaneously with their being sent to Washington."

"You're a liar," muttered Chick, under his breath. "And you know it."

Chick had been gazing steadily at the tall professor without being observed, and the result of his inspection was that he did not like the look of the stranger. It occurred to Chick, too, that Professor Tolo was too sure of Nick Carter's name after hearing it for the first time that night.

"I could not interfere with any of Mr. Anderton's papers, professor," said Nick. "I am sorry that you have been disappointed. I should think the best way for you to see these records you want would be to communicate with Washington."

The professor bowed and shrugged his shoulders, while a smile spread over the yellow face beneath the large spectacles.

"Probably you are right, Mr. Carter. I thank you for the suggestion. Any suggestion from so able a detective as everybody knows you to be cannot but be valuable. I am right, am I not, in supposing that you are the Mr. Nicholas Carter whom all the world knows? Your home is in Madison Avenue, is it not?"

"Yes. That is where I live, and my name is Nicholas."

Nick Carter said this in the cold tone in which he had conducted most of his part of the conversation. It was easy to be seen that he was not favorably impressed with the rather too smug Professor Tolo.

They were interrupted by a knock at the door. It was Ruggins, who announced that a man, who seemed much excited—a young man—wanted to see Mr. Carter on an important matter.

"Which Mr. Carter?" demanded Nick.

"Both, 'e said. 'E asked if you were both 'ere, and when I told him yes, 'e said that was what he wanted. So I came up and left 'im in the 'all till I could find out whether you would see 'im."

"It might be Patsy," whispered Chick to his chief.

The same idea had occurred to Nick Carter, and he hurried out of the room, followed by Chick and Ruggins, who closed the door behind him.

Instantly the Japanese professor became active. He carefully laid a heavy chair on its side against the door. Then he ran across the room, to where a tall bookcase stood against the wall in a corner, opposite the windows.

Professor Tolo had a remarkable knowledge of its arrangements. Throwing open one of the large glass doors of the case, he hastily removed four or five heavy books and placed them on a chair by the side of it. Then he fumbled inside, feeling the back wall.

"Curses!" he growled. "Where is that button? The chart I have gives it just about here. Let me see."

He thrust his hand into the long black coat he wore, and felt in a pocket, from which he drew forth a peculiar-looking little volume, whose covers were made of some sort of shiny green substance, and which was held together by a metal clasp.

"If they will only stay away long enough," he muttered, while the perspiration came out on his forehead in large drops. "The jade book will tell me. But I've got to have time to look it up."

He stepped back from the bookcase, so that he could see better by the electric light just behind him, and opened the metal clasp of the green-covered book with a click.

He was still turning the leaves—which seemed to be of parchment—when he heard footsteps outside the door.

"Too late this time," he mumbled. "But I'll get it yet. That infernal Nick Carter! Who would have thought he would mix himself up in this? And his man, too! I'll have a reckoning with both of them in due time. They'll find out that the crossed needles can reach anybody!"

Hurriedly he thrust the jade book, as he called it, back into his pocket, and opening one of the big volumes he had taken from the bookcase, seemed to be deeply absorbed in reading. In fact, he was so taken up with it that he did not heed a racket at the door, when somebody outside pushed it against the overturned chair.

It was not until Nick Carter had forced his way in, and Chick was picking up the chair, that he turned, with a far-away expression, and smiled.

"Ah, Mr. Carter! Back again? I took the liberty of looking at this book when I found myself alone. It is by my dear friend Anderton, written several years ago. I have heard of it, but never happened to get hold of it before. Do you know the work? It is called 'The Orient and Orientalism.' A splendid treatment of a great subject. Masterly, in fact. I have often thought ——"

"Why did you barricade the door?" demanded Nick, his eyes blazing. "I don't understand this, Professor Tolo."

There was no chance to ignore the anger in the detective's tones, and the professor came to himself with a jerk. He shut the book and put it on its shelf, while he looked from Nick Carter to Chick, and back again, in a most edifying bewilderment.

"I don't understand," he faltered.

"You placed a chair against that door, didn't you?" insisted the detective.

"Did I?" asked the professor vacantly. "I—I don't know. I was thinking about something else. Why, I—— Oh, yes, so I did. I remember. As I passed a chair, I accidentally knocked it over. I intended to pick it up, of course. But I saw the title of this volume in the bookcase——"

"Away across the room?" growled Chick.

The professor disregarded the query, and continued: "When I saw that this book was here, I forgot everything else. All I saw was this work, that I have longed for years, to hold in my hand, and I forgot all about the chair. How I wish my dear Anderton were alive! He would lend it to me, I know. As it is, I must try and get a copy somewhere else."

"It would be advisable, I think," said the detective, as he picked up the other volumes and replaced them in the bookcase. "Is there anything more I can do for you, professor? You will pardon me if I say that I am very busy, and that it is getting late."

"My dear Mr. Carter, I am sorry I have disturbed you. I apologize most sincerely. Good night!"

He walked to the door, opened it, turned to bow and smile, and went down the stairs.

Nick Carter waited till he heard the front door close after the professor, and turned to Chick. But it was unnecessary for him to say anything. Chick nodded comprehendingly, and leaped down the stairs three or four at a time. Then he dashed along the hall and out to the street.

"I'll go, too," muttered Nick, as he also ran down the stairs and to the outer air.

He had only just got off the stone steps and turned to the darkness on the left, when he heard a muffled cry from somebody, followed by a scraping on the sidewalk and the sound of something falling heavily.

"Chick!" he called.

There was no answer, and Nick Carter felt a strange premonition of evil. He ran down the avenue for perhaps a hundred feet. Then, as he stumbled over something soft that was lying across the sidewalk, he knew that his premonition was not without foundation.

Chick was stretched out, unconscious. The detective turned the light of his pocket flash upon him and gave vent to a shout of horror.

Sticking in the sleeve of his insensible assistant were two long needles, crossed!

"Great heavens!" cried Nick. "Is it possible they've got Chick? Is no one safe from these fiends?"

CHAPTER V.

IN AND OUT.

It would be hard to express in ordinary words the wave of relief that surged through Nick Carter as he knelt by the side of Chick, and, looking closely at the sleeve of his coat, saw that the crossed needles had not gone in far.

"They haven't reached his flesh, I'm sure," murmured Nick. "They only just catch in the cloth. The wretch who did this hadn't time to finish the job. The needles got entangled in the cloth, and before he could drive them in, he heard, or saw, me coming."

Cautiously, the detective withdrew the needles and laid them on the walk, by his side. Then, picking up the unconscious Chick, he threw him over one shoulder, and carried him into the Anderton mansion.

Nick Carter was blessed with extraordinary strength, and although Chick was solid and of good weight, the burden was nothing to the detective.

"Merciful 'eavens!" squeaked Ruggins, as Nick came up the stone steps. "What's that, Mr. Carter?"

"Fainted, I think," replied the detective briefly. "Let me put him on this sofa in the hall."

When Chick was laid out on a long leather settee that had been encumbered with a raincoat and other garments untidily left there by Ruggins, and which Nick Carter unceremoniously swept to the floor, the detective hastily removed Chick's coat, and pulled up his shirt sleeve on one side.

"This was the arm," he muttered. "There is no mark of the needles in the sleeve, and I could not find any through the coat. I don't think there's any danger of his having been struck. But I want to find out."

With his flash lamp and magnifying glass, he went slowly and minutely over the whole length of Chick's arm. The skin was perfectly smooth, without a prick or abrasion of any kind on it from shoulder to wrist.

"Just what I hoped. The needles never went through. If the point of one of them had touched his flesh, he would be dead before this. A more powerful poison I never came across, judging by its effects on Brand Jamieson and poor Andrew Anderton."

"Hello, chief! What's the matter?" interposed a feeble voice.

"What, Chick? Are you all right again?" asked Nick, smiling, as Chick raised his head. "I was just going to

ask you what was the matter? Ah, I see! You've been rapped on the head."

"Oh, yes," was the response, as Chick sat up on the settee and let his feet fall to the floor. "I remember now. I was following the professor—a few yards behind him, so that he shouldn't see me. Then I had a feeling as if a crowbar had come down on top of my head, and that was all I knew."

"It was a sandbag," declared Nick. "There is a little mark on your head, made by that metal initial you had put in the crown of your hat. The sandbag came down on top of your derby, crushed it in, and caused the brass letter to cut your scalp just a little. There is no mark on your hat, however. It was merely slammed in by something bulky and yielding, and the inference is that it was a sandbag."

"'Oly 'eavens!" mumbled Ruggins, who had been listening. "'Ow easy it seems when you know."

"I guess you're right," agreed Chick, speaking to Nick. "But it was so sudden and unexpected that I did not get a chance to see who did it, or how."

"It wasn't the professor?"

"No. He was some distance in front, and I don't think he knew I was following him. He did not turn his head. He walked along as if he wasn't thinking of anything except to get to where he was going. I believe he had a taxi. I saw one waiting about two blocks from the house."

"There was none there when I went out," observed Carter reflectively. "I guess you're right. But wait a minute. I have something to look after outside. Go up to the study and wait for me."

As Chick got up to obey, Nick Carter hurried out of the house and to the place where he had left the crossed needles. He had put them close to the iron fence of a house, so that there was no danger of their being trodden on—even if anybody should happen to pass that way.

"I don't think there has been any one going by since I left them," he muttered. "Anyhow, here are the needles."

He put them carefully between the leaves of his notebook, which he carried in his hand back to the house, and up to the study. When he got there, he laid the book on the table and opened it.

"You see, Chick, the person who knocked you down belonged to the Yellow Tong. That is proved by the fact that he tried to kill you with the crossed needles."

"What?" cried Chick, turning pale.

"Oh, it's all right now, my boy!" laughed Nick Carter. "I wouldn't have told you otherwise. The needles did not get to you. But that is no credit to the blackguard who knocked you down. They were sticking in your coat sleeve when I found you on the sidewalk. I satisfied myself that the points had not reached you, even before I picked you up. But I don't understand what the object was in attacking you, unless——"

He paused and walked several times up and down the room before he spoke again.

"I have it," he declared at last. "It is simple enough. Somebody saw you following Professor Tolo—somebody in his employ. To prevent your finding out where the professor was going—and perhaps in fear that you might hit on the professor's real identity—this stranger knocked you down and tried to kill you with the needles."

"Then you believe Tolo is connected in some way with the Yellow Tong?"

"I certainly do."

"If that is the case, it ought not to be hard to get at the secret of Mr. Anderton's death."

Nick Carter smiled slightly and shook his head.

"My dear Chick, don't jump hastily to conclusions. What evidence have we got against Professor Tolo?"

"Plenty, I should think. Wasn't he snooping about in this room when we came back to it, after going downstairs to see a man who had disappeared when we got there? Then, doesn't he hide his face with those big spectacles? And wasn't I following him when I was sandbagged and struck at with the crossed needles?"

"All that is suspicious, but not proof, Chick."

"Do we know where he lives?"

"That is easily found out," replied Carter. "But even then, we shall have to learn a great deal more before we can show that he is associated with the Yellow Tong."

"But you believe he is, don't you?"

"I do. Only we haven't anything conclusive with which to back up that belief—yet. For the present, I want to find out how the person who killed Andrew Anderton got into this room. When I have reached that point, I shall have something from which to start on other inquiries. It would give us a base of operations."

Nick Carter picked up a small pasteboard box from the table which had been filled with brass paper fasteners at one time, but was nearly empty now. He threw out the three or four fasteners that remained. Then he placed the crossed needles in the box and fitted on the lid. To make it still more secure, he put on two thick rubber bands. Then he dropped the box into his coat pocket.

"Going to examine those needles, I suppose, chief?" asked Chick.

"Yes, when I have leisure, at home. They are so dangerous that I don't like to handle them until I can do so carefully. I would not even trust them in an envelope. The points could easily come through, and one touch might mean death."

Chick shuddered, in spite of himself, as he thought how easily he might have been scratched when the ghastly instrument was thrust into his sleeve, as he lay on the sidewalk.

"What are we going to do now?" he asked.

"Come out on that balcony, and then we will see. But first we'll turn out the lights in this room."

This was done; then Nick went to the window he had gone out by before, and the next minute he and Chick were standing outside, in the pitch darkness. Just as they got out, a distant tower clock chimed twelve.

"Now, Chick, I have a theory. It isn't anything more than that, but it is a strong one. I want you to climb into that next yard. You see there is a high wooden fence dividing it from this."

"About fifteen feet, I should say," put in Chick.

"Not quite that, I think," returned Carter. "But high enough. Anyhow, I should like you to climb over, if you will. Then look about and see if there is a long plank over there, or a ladder. I will stay here, on the balcony, where I can look over, in case of any interference with you, and be ready to help. You will get over with this rope ladder."

He turned the flash on the ladder already referred to, which was intended by Andrew Anderton for use as a fire escape, if necessary, and showed that it had two powerful and large steel hooks at the end.

"I see," said Chick. "I'll climb down to our yard by this. Then you'll drop it to me, and I'll throw up the end to the top of the fence and hook it on. Is that the idea?"

"You have it exactly. Now, are you ready?"

"Sure! Let her go!"

It did not take Chick long to carry out his instructions. In a very short space of time he was astride of the high fence. This brought him almost level with Nick, standing on the balcony, and not more than ten feet away, for the window was almost at the corner of the Anderton house.

"Careful, Chick!" whispered Nick. "Better drop your ladder into the other yard and go down that way."

"All right! Then what am I to do?"

There was a short pause, while Nick Carter considered his next move. Then he said quietly:

"If there is a ladder, or plank, push it up to the top of the fence. I want to see whether it could have been used as a bridge to get to this balcony from the yard. Do you begin to see what I'm driving at?"

"I'd be a bonehead if I didn't," replied Chick, as he went to work.

For perhaps a minute there was silence. Then a gruff voice broke out, demanding to know who was there. This was followed by a sound of fighting, with Chick's voice mingling with the gruff tones heard before.

"You're a burglar. That's what you are!" roared the gruff person. "I'll have you pinched as soon as I can get you to the front door! Come on! You can't get away! Lend me a hand here, Bill!"

"I'm here," responded a voice that was strangely squeaky, and might have been that of a Chinaman, except that it had not the Mongolian accent. "And the others will help."

"The durned, sneaking thief! Out with him!"

There was a little more noise. Then a door banged, and—silence!"

Nick Carter hurriedly went through the window to the study, and, without taking the time to close it, rushed to the door, down the stairs, past the mystified Ruggins, and out to the street.

There he met Chick, very much ruffled, and with his battered hat in his hand, coming along from the next house, and occasionally looking over his shoulder, as if he expected to see somebody come out.

"Well, chief, they bounced me!" he said, in a rueful tone. "Chucked me out on my head."

"Who?" asked Nick Carter.

"I don't know. I didn't see anybody. I only felt that there were at least three men, and they were all huskies, too. We were in the dark. They shoved me clean through the house and out of the front door before I had any chance to fight back. It was the quickest bounce I ever had—or ever gave any one else. What shall we do? Break down the door and go in?"

"No. We'll leave them for the present. The caretaker had a right to throw you out if he thought you were a burglar, and, naturally, if he had any friends with him, they would help. We can't break in, unless we want to bring the police. I am glad he didn't call the police, as it was."

"Do you think he would dare do that?" asked Chick significantly.

"No," was Nick Carter's slow reply. "I don't think he wants the police to get into that house. That is where, I think, we have them."

"You mean——"

"I mean that I am convinced the murderer of Andrew Anderton came in from that house. But we can't do anything more now. We'd better go in and close that study. Then we'll go to bed. Do you feel like walking?"

"Yes."

"Very well. We'll walk home."

CHAPTER VI.

PATSY'S STILL-HUNT.

"I believe I've found him," was the assertion with which Patsy Garvan greeted Nick Carter, as he opened the door of his own library. "I've heard of a chink with a sore mudhook and a listener branded from the top edge down to the flap where you'd hang an earring, if you wore such a thing."

Patsy jumped from behind Nick's desk as the detective and Chick entered the room, and it was obvious that the enthusiastic second assistant had been about to write a report for his chief when he was interrupted.

He had thrown his hat on a chair, taken off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and thrust the fingers of his left hand through his hair, as a preparation for literary labor. Writing was one of the occupations that he seldom took up by choice.

"Where is he, Patsy?" asked Nick, as he took the chair the young fellow had vacated. "Can you produce him?"

"Sure I can," replied Patsy. "That is, after we've laid out three or four other chinks who'll maybe stick in the way."

"In Chinatown?" asked Chick.

"Naw!" was Patsy's scornful reply. "That isn't any place to look for a chink who's traveling on the ragged edge of the law. That's where you'd naturally look for him, and he wouldn't be a chink if he didn't have cunning enough to be somewhere else. Gee! They're a wise bunch, and don't you forget it. Why, I——"

"Where did you find him?" interrupted Nick. "Get down to business."

"Well, I'll tell you," returned Patsy, in a half-apologetic tone. "When I went out of the house to-night, to look for this chink, I didn't know where to go. It wasn't likely he'd be down near Mott or Doyers or Pell Street. Those are Chinatown, of course, and there are more chinks to the square yard around there than you'd find in square miles anywhere else in New York."

"That's so," commented Chick.

"Of course, it's so. Everybody knows that. Also, there was a possibility that this crooked-eyed geezer might be there. But I didn't think so. The question was, where should I look? I know a lot of chink laundries in Greater New York, and some more over in Jersey City. But it would take me a week to look into them all, and I wouldn't be sure of landing my man, at that."

"Great Scott! Why don't you tell your yarn right

off the hat, Patsy?" begged Chick. "Where is this China man?"

"I'm coming to that, Chick. Don't be in such a hustle. When I'd walked around for a while, thinking it over, I found myself back in front of our house."

"Yes?"

"I was on the other side of the avenue, in the shadow, when I saw two men come out of this house."

"You did?" shouted Chick. "Did you know them? Who were they? Why didn't you say so at first?"

"Of course, I knew them," replied Patsy, to Chick's first query. "They were the chief and you."

Chick snorted in disgust, while Nick Carter laughed, for he had suspected what Patsy would say.

"What did you do then?" asked Nick.

"I followed your taxi in another one that I picked up on Thirty-fourth Street, and I told him to keep yours in sight. It took me to Andrew Anderton's house.

"When I saw you and Chick go in, I paid off my taxi driver and told him to beat it. Then I took up my post on the other side of the avenue and watched. You see, you'd told me that it was the Yellow Tong that had laid out Mr. Anderton, and I know the ways of chinks."

"Go on."

"You hadn't been in there more than a minute before a chink came strolling past the house, and he met another one at the corner. Then two more came, and two more after that. They did not all stay in a bunch, but I saw them all speak to each other."

"What about the man with the scar that the chief wants?" put in Chick.

"I'm coming to that. The chinks were all watching the Anderton house in a casual kind of way, but all at once I found two of them were missing. What was funny about that was that they did not walk away. I saw the whole six in front of the house at one moment, and the next, when I went to count them, there were only four."

"What had become of the other two?"

"I don't know. But that wasn't all of it. While I was wondering where they had gone, I'm a chink myself if two more didn't vanish the same way."

"But they must have gone somewhere," interposed Nick Carter impatiently. "They weren't swallowed up by the sidewalk."

"That's what they seemed to be," insisted Patsy. "However, I wasn't going to stand anything like that without trying to call the bluff. So I walked down the avenue for a block, under the trees, against the park fence, and then crossed over. I came moseying along past Anderton's, and there was my two Mr. Chinks."

"What were they doing?"

"Just coming slowly along, chattering to each other. I don't know much chink lingo, but I'm on to some of their words, and I heard one of them say he'd had another fight. The other one asked him what about. Then came something I couldn't make out, but I caught the chink word for smoothing iron."

"Yes?"

"Just then they came into the light of an arc lamp, and I got a flash at the ear of the one who said he'd been in a fight. I saw the white scar. At once I piped off his right hand, and I saw that he had a finger tied up in a white rag. That was enough. I kept right on past them, as if I wasn't interested. But I knew they were suspicious."

"What did they do?"

"They waited till I'd got to the corner, where I turned around. I know that part of the avenue pretty well, and I made for a vacant lot with boards built up around it. There's one loose board that I'd noticed when I was past there last week, and it had struck me then that it would be handy if a fellow happened to want to hide."

"That's right, Patsy!" commended Nick. "A good detective is always careful to take note of everything. The most unimportant things—or things that seem unimportant—may mean a great deal at some other time."

"Exactly the way I'd figured it," said Patsy, his freckled face flushing with pleasure at his chief's words. "And it just hit the spot to-night. I slipped through the hole—just wide enough for me to squeeze through—and pulled the board back into place."

"It's a good job you're slim, Patsy," smiled Nick.

"Yes. That's been a help to me many times. Anyhow, as I was going to say, I hadn't more than got behind the boards, when the chinks came to the corner and peeked around. There's a big arc light there, you know, so that I could see them quite plainly. They waited a minute, and then they walked past the place where I was, and hustled around into Madison Avenue. I was out of the hole and at the corner just as they boarded a street car."

"Did you get on the same car?" asked Chick.

Patsy shook his head emphatically.

"Not me, Chick. I was too wise for that. But luck was with me, for another car came along, close behind the other. There had been a blockade downtown, and there was a string of five or six cars in a row."

"Well?" put in Nick.

"There was nothing to it after that," replied Patsy, grinning. "The chinks got off at Hundred and Twenty-fifth and walked east. I was a block behind them. They turned the corner when they got to Third Avenue, and then another corner. I landed them at last. They went into a chink laundry that was all dark. One of them knocked at the door. It was opened right away. I guess there was a peephole. But after a while the door swung back and the two went in."

"And that was all?"

"Not quite. I hung around for a while, and, sure enough, four other Chinamen came and got in. I couldn't see whether they were the same four I'd been watching on Fifth Avenue, and who got away from me, but it's a gold watch to a rusty nail that they were."

"You know just where this laundry is, of course?" asked Nick.

"Geel! Yes. I can lead you right to it. But there's a little more I haven't told you yet. I thought, if I hung around for a while, I might find out something else. So I crossed the street, a little way below the laundry. Then I came back and got into a doorway right opposite. I hadn't been there more than two minutes, when a taxicab came up and a tall man got out. I got only a glimpse of him. He had a long black coat and soft hat, and he wore spectacles with big black rims."

Nick Carter betrayed the first excitement that had marked him since Patsy began to tell his story.

"Was he a Chinaman or a Japanese, Patsy?" he asked eagerly.

"Search me. I couldn't see in the dark."

"Where did he go?"

"Into the laundry. The door opened as soon as the taxi stopped. There wasn't any waiting for him. It was all done up in a flash. He'd gone in and the taxi was on its way in less time than you could take off your hat. I did not stay any longer. I thought I'd seen enough. I jumped an elevated train and came home. The name on the sign over the laundry was 'Sun Jin.'"

"That will do," said Nick Carter shortly. "We'll all go to bed. In the morning we'll go after the man with the scar on his ear and the rag on his finger."

CHAPTER VII.

CHICK FINDS HIS MAN.

If Chick had a fault, it was an excess of enthusiasm in his work that sometimes led him into indiscretion. That is what Nick Carter told him sometimes, although the admonition never had any particular effect. Chick would go ahead on his own responsibility whenever he believed he could get results.

It was because of this disposition to do things on his own judgment that he did not go to bed when told to do so by his chief. He went to his bedroom obediently enough. But he did not stay there.

"The chief believes I'm tired," he muttered, as he sat on the edge of his bed, waiting till the house should quiet down. "That's why he fires me off to bed. Well, I feel just right for work, and I'm going to do it."

He chuckled to himself, as he thought of how quickly Patsy would be in his room, to go with him, if he knew what Chick contemplated.

"But I don't want Patsy," he decided. "I can handle this myself. That chink with the scar probably killed Mr. Anderton, and if I could get him, I'd probably have the whole case cleared up. If I don't get him, I'm going to interview that professor. What was he going into that laundry for? A man like him, who is supposed to be a Japanese, and who is supposed to be a professor, wouldn't be mixing up with chinks of that kind if he was square. Well, he's got to talk to me."

Chick felt sure that the attack on him had been made by order of Professor Tolo, and he believed that he would be found to be mixed up in some way with the Yellow Tong.

"I don't believe he is what he pretends to be," went on Chick, as he got up from the bed and put a revolver in his pocket. "Anyhow, I'll be ready for him if he tries any more monkey work with me."

He went to the door, opened it a little, and listened. Everything was quiet. No doubt Nick Carter had gone to bed, and Patsy, of course, was in his own room. It would be safe to go out.

Chick knew the house so well that he could have gone down the stairs in darkness and let himself out without a sound. But there was a light in the hall, which was always kept burning all night, and it enabled Chick to get out that much easier.

"Well, I did that without disturbing anybody," he murmured. "Now for a taxi and the laundry uptown. If I can only find Mike Donovan at his usual stand in Thirty-fourth Street, I shall have somebody to help me if I should need him. Mike is a good man."

He referred to a certain taxicab chauffeur whom he and Nick Carter both employed frequently. This chauffeur, Mike Donovan, was an ex-lightweight champion, and he enjoyed nothing so much as a good scrap, notwithstanding that he was no longer a professional pugilist. He was the same man who had taken Nick Carter to Mr. Anderton's house earlier in the evening.

"Is that you, Mike?" asked Chick, stopping at a taxicab that was one of a row drawn up in front of a big hotel and looking in at the window. "Donovan, are you in there?"

"Faith an' Oi am," was the good-humored response, as Mike Donovan's face came to the window. "Howly saints! If it ain't Chick! Phwat do yez want, me bye? Is it annythin' Oi can be afther doin' fer yez?"

"Drive me in your cab to Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street and Third Avenue," replied Chick. "Then I'll tell you where to go."

"Jump in," was Mike Donovan's response, as he got out of the cab and showed himself a rather small, but compact, middle-aged man, with red hair and a laughing, Irish face. "Oi wuz jest takin' a rest, so I wuz, an' hopin' thot Oi moight git home in the marnin' wi'out anny more thravelin'. But it's yese'f thot's welcome, Chick. An' I wish there wuz to be a foight as well as a ride in the cab for both of us."

"There may be that, Mike," replied Chick dryly, as he took his seat inside, and Mike set the cab moving.

Mike did not reply, because he was busy with his wheels and levers. But it rejoiced his heart to know that there was likely to be a spice of adventure for him. Indeed, he had surmised there would be as soon as Chick hailed him. What would he be going uptown for in a hurry at two o'clock in the morning unless there were a ruction on the horizon? His earlier trip with Nick Carter told him there was some adventure promised, but he said nothing about that.

It seemed to Chick hardly any time before he was out of the taxicab, within a block of the laundry of Sun Jin, which was so enshrouded in darkness that only the gleam of a distant street arc light enabled him to make it out at all.

"Stay here, Mike," he directed, in a low tone. "When I want you, I'll give you a signal of some kind."

"All roight, Chick! Faith, yez'll foind me wid me cab," returned Mike Donovan, as Chick slipped away.

Chick did not answer, for, at that moment, two men came out of the laundry and hurried in the other direction, finally disappearing around a corner.

"Come along, Mike! Follow those fellows. They've probably got a car, or something, around there," said Chick, as he ran back and jumped into the taxi. "Don't lose sight of that tall man, in the big slouch hat and long coat. You saw him, didn't you?"

"Oi did thot," replied Mike, as he threw on the power. "He looked loike a praste or a preacher of some koind. He wuz a quare koind o' mon to be comin' out av a laundry, so he wuz."

At the corner of the street Chick saw that he had guessed aright as to there being a vehicle in waiting. A taxi was two blocks ahead, going fast.

"Sure, it's wan o' thim nighthawks," proclaimed Mike Donovan. "Oi know 'em whin Oi see thim. Thot cab

don't belong to no company. It's just a private wan, d'yez moind? But av he t'inks he can git away from me—well, he's got anither guess comin'."

It need not be told in detail how Mike kept on the track of the other cab. Suffice it that when it turned into Fifth Avenue and kept on downtown, Chick was in time to see the two men go into the house next door to Anderton's, and that he recognized one of them as Professor Tolo, while the other wore the blue blouse and wide trousers of a Chinese laundryman.

"You can go now, Mike," he whispered to Donovan. "If you stayed around, they might see you and be suspicious. Besides, I can handle this case myself now."

"An' don't I git no chance for a scrap?" demanded Mike, much disappointed. "Sure, I'd loike to let droive just wance at wan av thim there chinks. Yez tould me Oi w'u'd."

"I know I did, Mike," returned Chick soothingly. "But we can't always have things the way we want them. Better luck next time."

He paid the sum the taximeter showed, and gave Mike a generous tip in addition. Then he waved his hand in farewell and stepped into the deep doorway of the Anderton house, waiting there until Mike Donovan's taxicab had been swallowed up in the gloom.

It did not take Chick as long to get Ruggins to the front door as he had feared it would. The fact was that the butler had been so disturbed by all that had taken place that night and morning in the usually peaceful home that he could not sleep. So, when the night bell, which rang in Ruggins' bedroom at the back of the hall, sounded, he heard it immediately.

"'Ello!" he grunted. "'Ere's more of it. I'm blowed if I ever was in a game like this 'ere before. What is it now?"

He slipped into some of his clothing, and, with his suspenders hanging down, cautiously opened the front door a little way and peeped out. He recognized Chick at once.

"W'y, Mr. Carter! Is there anything else wrong?"

"Not that I know of," replied Chick, as he pushed his way in and closed the door. "But I want to go up to Mr. Anderton's study again. Don't say a word to anybody."

"Do you mean you're going to find out who murdered Mr. Anderton?"

"I'm trying to do so. You can go to bed again. I will stay up in that room for the rest of the night. Mr. Anderton has some valuable things there, and if a man could get in to kill him, there is nothing to prevent his coming back if he wants to. Don't ask any more questions, please, Ruggins. Mr. Carter told you to let me go where I pleased in the house, didn't he?"

"Yes. But I didn't know you were coming back at this time in the morning," protested Ruggins, in a doubtful tone. "Still——"

"Still," interrupted Chick. "I want to do it, because I believe it may help me to find out something. That's all."

Leaving Ruggins to return to bed—or to sit up, if it suited him, Chick went up to the study and shut himself in. Then, without turning on the light anywhere, he stole cautiously to one of the windows and cautiously peered between the thick curtains.

Instantly he dropped the curtains into place again and set his mind busily to work to decide on a hiding place in the room.

There was a large leather chair near the open fireplace, so heavy that it was not easily moved, and which obviously was meant for use as a lounging nest in which one could luxuriate in laziness at the fire. Behind this chair Chick squeezed himself just as the window opened, with a creak, behind the curtains.

He was not surprised when the man who came into the room proved to be Professor Tolo. The intruder carried a large pocket flash lamp, and his first action was to throw the light all about the room.

Chick squeezed into a still smaller space behind the great chair, ready to hide himself entirely when the light should come his way. Then one of the incandescent lights was switched on, and he saw there was a Chinaman in native dress with the professor.

"Stand at the door, Sun Jin," whispered the professor, in English, to his companion.

Without a word, the Chinaman stepped over to the door, saw that there was a key in the door, and turned it in the lock. Chick was glad he had not followed his first impulse, to lock the door when he came in. If he had, it would have told the rascals there was somebody else in the room.

Without paying any particular attention to Sun Jin, the professor began to pull from the bookcase the same volumes he had moved in the presence of Nick Carter. Placing them on a chair, he took out several more books. Then Chick heard a clicking sound.

"Wonder whether I ought to plug him right now," thought Chick, fingering the automatic revolver in his coat pocket. "I could wing him, so that he would be helpless, without killing him. Then I could lay out the chink, and——"

"Curse him! It isn't here!" broke out Professor Tolo, in unmistakable English.

He had opened a recess at the back of the bookcase, behind the place where the removed volumes had stood, and found that nothing was there.

"That's worth knowing," thought Chick. "The thing they murdered Mr. Anderton for has got away from them, after all. Now, what will they do? There is one satisfaction I have, and it was worth my coming here to find out—this Tolo is mixed up with the Yellow Tong. I wish——"

Professor Tolo had been hastily replacing the books, and now he turned to the Chinaman standing at the door, to say, in a surly tone:

"Look out and see if everything is clear."

The Chinaman came from the door, and, as if to make sure there was no one in the room besides himself and the mysterious professor, walked all around it, gazing in every direction.

It was well for Chick that he was in deep shadow, or he must have been discovered, for the Chinaman looked all about him, even to placing his hand on the back of the big leather chair. Chick drew back, and was able only just to hide himself.

The Chinaman moved on toward the window, without seeing Chick. On the other hand, Chick had had a clear view of the fellow's face, and as he placed his hand on the automatic pistol in his pocket, he murmured excitedly:

"That's the man. He's the chink with the scar on his ear, and his finger is still tied up in the white bandage."

The next moment, unable to restrain himself, Chick had leaped from his hiding place and hurled himself upon the Chinaman!

CHAPTER VIII.

CHICK MAKES DISCOVERIES.

It was not a wise thing for Chick to do, of course. But that same excessive enthusiasm which had induced him to come here, on his own responsibility, instead of going to bed, as he had been told to do by his chief, made him indiscreet now.

That he had the man whom Nick Carter had told Patsy to find, he was sure. But whether the Chinaman had killed Andrew Anderton or not was a question he could not answer positively.

"I don't doubt it," he thought. "Anyhow, what is he doing up in this room at this time in the morning? I'll lay him out on general principles."

It is pretty certain that Chick would have carried out this purpose if he had had only the Chinaman to deal with. But there was an interruption. He had the fellow by the throat and was cheerfully throttling him, when a heavy weight came down on the back of his head. He knew no more.

When Chick came to himself again, there were thin, white threads of light stealing into the room between the slightly parted window curtains. Daylight had come.

"Fool!" was Chick's first articulate utterance.

The epithet was not applied to the man who had knocked him down, or the Chinaman with whom he had been struggling when the blow came, either. He was calling himself a fool.

"The chief is always telling me not to fly off the handle," he continued, in a mumbling whisper. "And I'm always doing it. What chance had I when that tall old fraud was right behind me? As soon as I tackled the chink of course, Mr. Professor let me have it with a sandbag."

Chick was sitting up on the floor by this time, and as he felt his head without finding any cut or bruise, he knew that he had been sandbagged—for the second time within a few hours.

"That's what I was hit with," he decided judicially. "It is the favorite tool of the Yellow Tong. We knew that before, because two or three people have been laid out that way when some of the tong men were supposed to have done it. Even that poor Brand Jamieson, who got the crossed needles, too, was slammed with a sandbag first of all."

Chick's head cleared in the course of a few minutes, and he was able to review the situation in some sort of orderly fashion.

"After all," he reflected, "it isn't so bad. The chief wanted to find that fellow with the scarred ear and burned finger. Now I know where he hails from, because Patsy gave us a tip. Patsy knew the name over that laundry was Sun Jin, and that's what I heard the Jap call the chink I had on the floor. It all fits together like an easy jigsaw puzzle."

The blow on his head had made Chick feel a little sick, but he was able to get to his feet. When he had opened the study door, the fresher air of the hallways revived him.

He looked at his watch and found that it was five o'clock. There was no sign or sound of activity in the house. He made his way down the stairs and out to the avenue, without seeing anybody.

"That butler, Ruggins, was just about all in, I reckon," he thought. "He didn't care who was in the house, or what was going on, so long as he was not bothered. Well, I guess I'll get home, report to the chief, and then turn in myself. I know he won't let me do anything more till I've had some sleep. I hope he won't call me down too hard for what I've done. I've found out something, anyhow."

Chick intended to take a Madison Avenue car, as the easiest way to get downtown. So he turned off the avenue to a cross street, to wait for a car at the corner.

But he didn't have to take a car. To his intense satisfaction a taxi came crawling up behind him, at the leisurely pace which suggested that it had no fare inside. This was confirmed by a husky voice singing out, "Taxi?"

It was the chauffeur of the taxicab. He pulled the machine over to the curb, as he waved one hand to his possible patron, while the other controlled the steering wheel.

"Yes. All right!" responded Chick.

The chauffeur was enveloped in a great, hairy coat, and a cap of the same kind of fur was pulled well down over his face. The weather was not cold in the daytime, for it was early fall, but at night one can get pretty chilly driving a cab for hours at a stretch, and no doubt the heavy coat was comfortable between five and six in the morning.

"Take me down to Thirty-fourth Street and Madison," directed Chick. "Then I'll show you the house I want."

It was one of Nick Carter's precautions—which he also advised his assistants to observe—not to mention his address to strangers. It was better, he held, to get near the house, and then point it out to anybody to whom it was necessary to show it.

"All right," grunted the chauffeur. "Can you open the door yourself? You don't want me to get down, do you?"

"Of course not. I'm able to get into a cab without help," replied Chick, with a smile.

"It opens a little hard," said the cabman.

The taxi was in front of the vacant lot, with the high board fence around it, to which reference has been made in a former chapter. It was a lonesome spot, especially at that hour in the day.

Chick found that the door of the taxicab did indeed open hard. He could not turn the handle at first, and when he did accomplish this, it was with considerable difficulty that he got the door to open.

"Sticks like thunder!" he ejaculated, as he tugged at the handle. "What the deuce do you have your door so——"

That was all he had a chance to say. When the door did at last yield to his violent pull, four hands seized him by the head and shoulders, and he was dragged inside with a jerk. Then the door slammed shut, and he felt the cab whirling and rocking away, as three men held him firmly on the floor.

He was able to see that there were thick shades drawn down on both sides of the cab, so that no one could see in from the street.

If Chick had any idea of calling for help, that was soon put beyond his power. A large cloth, which he be-

lieved was of silk, from its feel, was bound tightly over his mouth and knotted at the back of his head.

A peculiar odor that or opium filled his nostrils. It would have told him, if he had needed the information, that he was in the hands of Chinamen. But he could see for himself, by the light that came to the interior from the front window—through which he had a view of the fur-clad chauffeur, calmly driving—that there were two Chinamen in ordinary laundrymen's garb, holding him, while a third man, with large, tortoise-shell-framed spectacles covering part of his yellow face and a slouch hat pulled so far down that it almost met the immense collar of his overcoat, sat half behind him.

Chick tried to turn. He wanted to look straight at the man with the spectacles. But the Chinamen gave him a quick wrench, to hold him away, and one of them threatened him with a club that looked like a child's black stocking packed halfway up its length with sand.

There was nothing to be done just then but to submit, and Chick was philosophical enough to make the best of a bad job. So he did not struggle. He simply knelt on the floor of the cab, where he had been originally put by his captors, and wondered how long it would be before he could force his way to freedom.

He had too much faith in himself to believe that these rascals could hold him very long. Besides, Patsy had traced this Professor Tolo to the laundry of Sun Jin, and he and Nick Carter surely would be paying a visit to that place very soon.

"This is the professor, behind those spectacles," Chick told himself, "and one of these chinks is the fellow with the scarred ear. I don't know the other one. Surely they can't think they can get me without having to pay for it."

Then he thought of the crossed needles that would have killed him if they had been driven a little farther into his sleeve, and he did not feel so sure that the rascals would not go to extremes rather than be caught themselves as the murderers of Andrew Anderton.

"But it isn't only that," went on Chick mentally. "They are after some records made by Anderton. They seem to be of vital importance to the tong. Well, we shall see."

It was just as Chick came to this conclusion that the taxicab stopped suddenly. At the same moment a large coat or cloak was thrown over his head, and he felt his senses leaving him under the influence of a strong narcotic, whose pungent odor gave him a sensation of horrible nausea.

He remained conscious long enough to realize that he was lifted out of the cab and carried a few yards. Then he heard a door bang, and that was all!

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS.

"See why Chick hasn't come down, Patsy," directed Nick Carter, as he and Patsy Garvan faced each other at breakfast the next morning. "He must have been very tired last night to sleep like this now."

Patsy left the room, but soon returned, with a queer look of dismay on his face.

"He isn't there," was his report. "His bed hasn't been slept in, either."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Nick sharply.

"Positive. I met Mrs. Peters on the stairs, and she told me none of the bedrooms have been touched by the maids yet. They never are at this time in the morning. Why, chief it's only eight o'clock."

But Patsy was speaking to emptiness by this time. Nick Carter had run up the stairs two at a time, and examined Chick's bedchamber for himself. He came down in another minute or two, a heavy frown on his brow.

"Let's have breakfast, Patsy."

"What about Chick?"

"Let's have breakfast," was all Nick Carter replied.

"Gee!" muttered Patsy. "I don't know whether I can eat anything. This thing has put a kink in my appetite that——"

Just then Mrs. Peters, the housekeeper, entered with a dish of ham and eggs, which she placed before Nick Carter. As she lifted the silver dish cover, she asked quietly:

"Didn't you know Mr. Chick was out, Mr. Carter?"

"No. Do you know what time he went out?"

"I heard the front door close about two o'clock. I think it was," she answered. "I wondered who it was. But there is nothing unusual in you or somebody to go out at any hour of the night."

"Sure as you live," interjected Patsy.

"But I knew you intended all to stay home last night, and that was why I couldn't make it out. So I thought I'd serve the ham and eggs myself, and ask you."

Mrs. Peters, the worthy housekeeper, had been with Nick Carter for many years, and took a motherly interest in him which excused her curiosity. The detective smiled kindly, as he replied:

"I'm glad you've told me this much, Mrs. Peters. I confess I don't know what has become of Chick. But I soon will. He has good reason for being away, no doubt."

He nodded a dismissal, and Mrs. Peters disappeared. Patsy did not ask any more questions for the present. He busied himself with breakfast. At the end of the meal Nick Carter asked him if he could take him direct to the Sun Jin laundry.

"I can do that, chief," replied Patsy. "But we'll find the chinks there pretty suspicious. How are we going to get in?"

"We'll see when we get there," replied Nick Carter quietly.

"I don't say you can't get into the laundry," went on Patsy. "We'll find one or two chinks in there, ironing and washing, as they always are. But you know that what you see in the shop of a chink laundry doesn't tell you what is going on behind or upstairs."

Nick Carter only nodded and smiled. He did not depend on Patsy, or anybody else, to make him understand the ways of Chinamen in New York.

"Call up Danny Maloney, and tell him to bring the small car—the new one. I don't think there are many persons in New York know I have that one. I have never had it out yet."

In ten minutes' time, Nick Carter and Patsy were sliding smoothly uptown in the new car which the detective had bought for daylight use—mainly because his other motor cars—and particularly the big sixty-horse-power machine—were too familiar to the gaze of certain New Yorkers who feared him.

Leaving the car at a little distance, Nick and Patsy walked along the side street on which Sun Jin's laundry was situated, and stepped inside. The detective produced a shirt and collar which he said he wanted laundered, and accepted the check from the moon-faced man at the ironing board without any comment.

During the transaction, another Chinaman continued to iron at a board at the back of the hot little room without turning his face toward the customers. He seemed to be completely absorbed in his work, and to feel no interest in anything else. Certainly, he showed no curiosity.

This did not deceive Nick Carter, however. He knew that the very calmness of these Chinamen was suspicious. There might be a dozen more of them in the place behind, or upstairs, and each one might be staring down through peepholes at the strangers.

Only one thing Nick was sure of, and that was that the man with the scarred ear was not in the front shop. Neither of the men working had any such mark, and their hands were clear of bandages or injuries.

Without comment or inquiry, Nick accepted his check. The Chinaman said laconically, "Thursday!" and went on with his ironing without looking at his visitors as they left the shop and closed the door behind them. Patsy glanced through the window as they passed. The two Chinamen were still ironing with characteristic patient industry.

Turning a corner, Nick met a policeman, and the quick look of recognition from the officer made him ask a quiet question, without stopping, as they passed:

"Is there another entrance into Sun Jin's laundry besides the front one?"

"Through the saloon on the corner," replied the officer briefly, as he walked on.

"That cop knows his biz," remarked Patsy, in a low tone. "Anybody seeing him would think he'd never seen you before."

"He's an old friend of mine," returned Nick coolly. "I have a great many on the force."

Neither Nick Carter nor Patsy wore any disguise, but both were dressed in such inconspicuous raiment that they looked like thousands of other New Yorkers. At a glance, one would have said they were ordinary business men—insurance agents, perhaps.

So, when they slipped into the saloon the policeman had specified and strolled into the room at the back of the bar, the waiter served them with the beer Nick ordered, and went back to the free-lunch counter in front without giving them any further attention.

"Now, Patsy! Hurry! Get across the yard at the back, and slip up the wooden stairs you see through the window. If the door is fastened, open it. You know how to do that."

"Sure!"

Patsy Garvan found the door locked, as Nick had anticipated. But, with a piece of strong steel wire, that was part of the equipment of his pocketknife, he operated the lock as easily as if he had a key.

Nick Carter sat at the table, with his glass of beer before him, having only sipped it, and through the window watched the door at the top of the crazy wooden staircase outside. He seemed perfectly cool, but his brain was working rapidly and his nerves were on a strain. He was listening for any sound that might suggest trouble for Patsy.

At the first note of alarm he would be on the stairs himself. But, no such note came. At the end of five minutes Patsy appeared again on the staircase, and immediately afterward he was once more sitting at the table, facing his chief.

"Well, Patsy?"

"Gee! There's nothing in that joint but two empty rooms. They're right over the laundry, and I found a crooked staircase leading down to a door on the ground floor."

"Yes?"

"I sneaked down, and there was a little hole that had been cut in the door with something. I peeked through, and, gee! there were the two chinks, still ironing."

"What was over the two empty rooms?"

"Nothing but the roof. You noticed that the whole shanty is one of those crazy frame buildings that chink laundries so often get into. Well, I saw there was a trapdoor to the roof, but there was no ladder or anything to get up to it, so I didn't try to see what was on the roof. It wasn't likely there was anything."

"The rooms were quite empty?"

"Yes, except for dust," replied Patsy. "The dust was some help," he continued, with a grin. "For I saw the marks of a lot of feet, and they were all that like the prints of chink felt shoes—except that there was one mark, which I found at different parts of the room, partly hidden by the chink shoes, and which showed that a fellow with American shoes had been there. They were large."

"I see," nodded Nick, rather eagerly. "The person who owned them was a big man?"

"I should think so, from the shoe prints."

"Wasn't there any furniture in the room, nor any scraps of rubbish that might give us a clew?"

Nick Carter put this question rather sharply. He couldn't believe that his quick-witted assistant had come away without finding something that might be useful.

"There was this," replied Patsy, handing a scrap of paper to his chief. "I don't know that it means anything. It was on the crooked staircase. Being white, it caught my eye, and I picked it up. I was going to throw it down again, and I would have done so if I hadn't remembered that you always say it is better to keep and examine everything when you are on a case, no matter if it doesn't seem of any account."

Long before Patsy had finished his disquisition, Nick Carter had taken from him the scrap of white letter paper his assistant had held out, and he was now gazing at it with a thoughtful eye.

The scrap of paper had been torn from an envelope—that was shown by the fact that part of the gummed flap still adhered—and on the fragment was a name, or part of one. It was "Bentha."

"Bentha?" murmured Nick. "It is easy to see that part of the name has been torn off. Of course, the name is 'Bentham.' Now, what brought this bit of paper to those stairs?"

He lighted a cigar and smoked for several moments in deep reflection. Then he drew from his pocket the powerful magnifying glass he generally carried, and gazed steadily at the bit of white envelope. Patsy noted that his attention was not concentrated on the name,

but that he looked at the back of the envelope as closely as at the front.

"Do you want that beer, Patsy?" he asked, at last, as he replaced the glass in his pocket, and carefully deposited the scrap of envelope between the leaves of his notebook. "If you don't, empty it into a cuspidor."

Patsy did not want the beer, and he disposed of it as he was told. The detective emptied his own glass into another cuspidor. Then he got up and sauntered out to the street. Patsy was close behind him.

When they got to the waiting motor car, Nick directed Danny Maloney to drive to a cross street near Andrew Anderton's house.

The detective did not speak during the ride. But when they got to their destination, he told Maloney to wait, and walked swiftly around to Fifth Avenue, and up the steps of the Anderton mansion.

As Nick and Patsy went in, they found themselves among half a dozen other men who were also going in.

"The coroner's inquest," whispered Carter to his assistant. "This is lucky. It prevents our being particularly noticed."

CHAPTER X.

NICK CONFIRMS A THEORY.

The jury, who had been entering with Nick Carter and Patsy, were ushered into the bedroom where the remains of Andrew Anderton lay. Thence they were conducted to the study, and shown just how the deceased had been found lying on the floor.

After that, the coroner addressed the jury at some length, telling them all he knew about the case—which was not much—and asking them to find a verdict that would give the police something to work on.

The jury—several of whom had had experience in this sort of thing and knew what was required of them—promptly brought in a verdict that "the deceased had come to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown."

Doctor Farrell, the coroner, thanked the jury and told them they could go. Their foreman wrote the verdict, for record, and directly afterward there was no one left in the room but the coroner, Nick Carter, and Patsy Garvan.

"It's the Yellow Tong, Mr. Carter," remarked Doctor Farrell gravely. "Doctor Miles showed me the crossed needles that were found in the body, and said that the tong had been trying to get hold of certain papers prepared by Mr. Anderton, to be submitted to the government at Washington. The doctor also told me that you were interested in the case."

"I am," affirmed Nick.

"Glad to hear it, Mr. Carter," responded Farrell heartily. "That means that poor Anderton will be avenged. Mind, I don't mean to cast any reflections on the ability of the police department. But it can't be denied that headquarters will be glad of your help."

"I often work in coöperation with police headquarters," was Nick's quiet reply. "Where are the crossed needles that were found in Mr. Anderton's chest?"

"Doctor Miles has them. He will produce them when required by the police. Do you want to examine them?"

"It is hardly necessary. I know as much about them as I require. They are charged with deadly poison, and a mere scratch is enough to cause death. What makes them the more dangerous is that they leave no marks. Even after death there is nothing to show that the poison has been used, unless there is an autopsy. I want to look about this room for a little while, however. You have finished with it, haven't you?"

"Yes, I am glad to say. I had to come here to hold this inquest. But my investigation is only preliminary—just to comply with the form of law. The real work on the case begins where I leave off," replied the coroner briskly. "Well, I must be going. I've a heap of work to do. Good morning!"

Doctor Farrell clattered down the stairs and out to the avenue, where his automobile was waiting. Nick Carter was glad to get rid of him. He sat down at the big table and took a white envelope out of the top drawer.

A moment's comparison of the envelope with the scrap that Patsy had found on the stairs at Sun Jin's laundry was sufficient to convince the detective that they were of the same kind. Then he looked into the wastebasket, which had never been emptied since the death of Anderton.

A low cry of satisfaction came from Nick Carter's lips as he found some scraps of an envelope among the other torn paper.

With patience and care, the detective pieced the fragments together, until he had a sort of framework of an envelope. From the middle of it had been torn part of a name and address, which he was convinced had been that of Matthew Bentham.

"Yes," he murmured, looking at the pieced envelope through the strong glass. "Here is the 'M' which he failed to tear off, and below is the whole word, 'Brooklyn,' with the initials 'N. Y.' I see. He wanted the address of Bentham, but he did not trouble to take the name of the borough. He knew it was in Brooklyn, anyhow."

"Have you got something, chief?" asked Patsy, who had been watching in silence. "Did that bit of paper I got help at all?"

Nick Carter laughed a hearty, but silent, laugh.

"It has helped me to know where Professor Tolo has gone, or will go, I think," he answered. "I'm going to see if I can find him. You stay here, however. I have a feeling that the mystery of Andrew Anderton's death may be solved in or near his own home."

"I don't see, exactly," replied Patsy. "But if you think Tolo had something to do with it, why don't you nab him, and prove it on him afterward. That's the way the police do, generally."

"It's a good way, too, in some cases, Patsy. But I want to get more than one man now. Besides, I don't believe Professor Tolo actually committed this murder."

"But he was behind it."

"Very likely. But what I want is the rascal who killed Mr. Anderton. If once I were to show my hand by having this Japanese professor arrested, the Chinaman, or whoever it was that drove the crossed needles into his heart would take fright."

"Either that or they would try to get you," declared Patsy doggedly.

Nick Carter shrugged his shoulders. He believed the Yellow Tong was on his track now. That was why he wanted to strike at several of the members at once, instead of merely picking off one man—even so important a one as this Japanese professor seemed to be.

"Never mind about talking. Stay in this room till I come back. But—here is something else. I wish you would sit by that window, behind the lace curtains, and partly behind the dark ones that are drawn over the window at night."

"I see," threw in Patsy. "There are two sets of curtains, one inside the other. You want me to keep out of sight of anybody outside. But who is there to see me? At the back is a big, vacant lot, and we are too high for any one in the yard to look in."

"Quite so, Patsy. I am aware that nobody in this yard could see you at the window, even if there were no curtains. But it is the next yard I want you to watch. The yard on your right as you stand at the window."

"Oho!" exclaimed Patsy, with a low whistle. "I'm on. That's where the chinks went when I missed them last night. They didn't come in here, but they sneaked into the next house."

"Probably."

"Yes, and I bet they slipped down into the basement. There is a gate in the iron railings. I see just what they did. They went through that gate and were out of sight in the kitchen while I was watching this house. Gee! This is going to be dead easy!"

"I don't know about that. But I hope we are getting a net around the rascals. I don't think I shall be away more than an hour. I'm going to see Mr. Bentham, over in Brooklyn. If I don't find anything there, I'll come back as fast as Danny Maloney can bring me. If there is anything to keep me, I'll telephone you right in this room from Mr. Bentham's house. Get all that?"

"Every word. So long!"

Patsy moved over to the window and ensconced himself behind the curtain, in accordance with his instructions, and Nick Carter drove away to Brooklyn.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LETTER.

Although this was the first time Nick Carter had ever visited Professor Matthew Bentham in his home, he had met him several times, at meetings of scientific societies and at public dinners.

The detective was a student, and whenever he could take time away from his main calling, that of investigator into strange crimes and seemingly unsolvable mysteries, he was pretty sure to be actively interested in the progress of the world from a scientific standpoint.

So, when he was ushered into the library of Matthew Bentham, in a quiet avenue in the shadow of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, the two met as old and valued friends.

Matthew Bentham had been sitting at his large table, an open letter in one hand and a crumpled newspaper in the other, as Nick entered. That he was deeply shocked was evident at the first glance. His hand shook as he gave it to the detective, and it was in a shaky voice that he requested his old friend to take a chair.

"I see you have read the awful news of Andrew Anderton's death at the moment you got his letter, professor," remarked Nick. "I thought it might happen in that way."

"Why, how did you know?" asked Bentham, in surprise. "It seems to me sometimes as if you know things that you could get only by some supernatural intuition. How did you know I have a letter from Anderton?"

Matthew Bentham was a tall, well-built man, whose ruddy face indicated that he was fond of outdoor life, in spite of his being a close student. The truth was that he learned many things about nature at first hand. He had traveled in many lands, besides knowing a great deal about his own, and his knowledge was extensive and peculiar. He had been lucky enough to conserve health and wisdom all in one operation.

"My explanation of how I know about the letter is very simple," replied the detective. "I had that letter mailed myself. It was written only a few minutes before his death last night."

"To think that Anderton should die of heart failure," exclaimed Bentham. "Why, I can hardly believe it. Think of the altitudes to which he climbed in the Himalayas, Carter. No man with a weak heart could stand such a cold and rare atmosphere as you get up there. Well, I'm glad I have probably the last words he ever wrote."

"Yes, there is no doubt of that, I think. The fact was, I had that letter mailed for certain reasons."

Matthew Bentham looked puzzled. Then he shook his head, as if he did not care to pursue the subject.

"Those reasons are sufficiently weighty," went on Nick, "for me to desire to know what he wrote. I realize that my request is distinctly out of the ordinary. But I think you know me well enough to be sure that I must have a very strong motive."

The professor was silent for a few moments. The detective knew he was turning the request over in his mind, and that it had not struck him at all favorably. Then he seemed to decide the other way, for he broke out impulsively:

"Well, it is rather irregular, but I don't know why you shouldn't see the letter. Of course, I have your promise that you will not let it go any further."

"Of course," replied Nick. "I think it is hardly necessary for me to say that, but I do promise."

Professor Bentham handed the letter to Nick Carter, who read as follows:

"My Dear Bentham: Am seizing the first opportunity since my return from China to tell you I have succeeded in getting hold of the secret records of the organization known as the 'Yellow Tong.' That the tong means mischief you will see by the papers that I am sending you by safe hands. You will not get them for a day or two, perhaps, because I am fairly certain there are agents of the Yellow Tong in New York now who are ready to go to any extreme to get those records. In fact, I have been told that Sang Tu himself is in the city—doubtless in disguise. As you know, he is the head of the tong, and as unscrupulous as he is able. When these records come to you, keep them safely until you see me. No one knows that I intend to transfer them to your custody, and because of that I feel they will be safe with you until it shall come time to transfer them to Washington. Until I see you, for a long talk, I remain, as ever, your faithful friend, Andrew Anderton."

That was all. It was evident to Nick Carter that the writer feared to trust too much to paper and ink, and that he had a great deal more to tell which he meant to communicate by word of mouth.

"The records have not come, I suppose?" asked Nick.

"Not yet. Moreover, I don't know how he is sending them. I shall be glad to get them, for he has told me just enough in this letter to assure me that the rec-

ords will be full of important information, both to the government and to science. As for Sang Tu, I never saw that individual. I am told he belongs to a powerful Manchu family, and that, before China became a republic, he exercised great influence at Peking. Now that my friend Anderton is dead, I suppose I shall have to take the responsibility of handling these records."

"And the danger," said Nick gravely.

"You mean from the Yellow Tong?"

"Yes, and particularly from Sang Tu. By the way, do you happen to know a certain Professor Tolo, a Japanese?"

"I never met him, but I have heard of him. He has not been in New York long. I hear that he is a very able man, and that his knowledge of the whole Orient is regarded as wonderful. Do you know anything about him?"

"I have seen him," replied Nick carelessly. "Well, I won't stay any longer, professor. I knew that these records were not to be found in Mr. Anderton's library, and I also had heard that he brought them with him."

"Oh, did you?" asked the professor, rather surprised. "I don't see how it was that you——"

"My dear Mr. Bentham," responded Nick, with a smile. "You know that I am employed to make many secret investigations. It came in my way to find out about these records, and when I heard that Mr. Anderton was dead, I looked through his study for these valuable papers. I was worried because they were not there. Now that I know you have them, I feel safer. Would you permit me to use your telephone? Then I won't trouble you any longer."

"Trouble me?" protested Bentham. "That's a nice thing for you to say, Carter. I haven't ever had you in my house before, and now you are apologizing for being here. I'll get even with you by never coming to your place," he added, smiling. "There's the phone. Go ahead!"

Nick took up the instrument, and soon had Patsy Garvan on the wire. He had listened not more than a few seconds, when he suddenly shouted back into the transmitter, in an agitated tone:

"All right, Patsy! I'll come over there at once. Keep quiet till I come."

He put the receiver on the hook, and, with a hasty "Good-by, professor. I'll see you later," dashed for the door.

"Wait a moment," cried Bentham. "What's the trouble?"

"No trouble at all!" shouted back Nick. "But I believe I'm going to find out something about the Yellow Tong."

Half an hour later he was flying up the stairs to the study of Andrew Anderton. He found Patsy Garvan striding up and down the room in a state of intense excitement.

"Where is he?" asked Nick, as he ran into the room.

"In that tool house, or whatever the place is, in the back yard," was Patsy Garvan's answer, as he ran to one of the windows and flung it wide open.

CHAPTER XII.

AVENGED.

The rope ladder that Chick had used the night before, and which was again coiled up in its place on the fire-escape balcony, was brought into use. Nick Carter did not hesitate now, nor did he care who saw his movements. He was first over the high fence into the next yard, but he had hardly alighted on the soft earth of the flower bed when Patsy Garvan was by his side.

"Shoot—to kill!" was Nick Carter's brief order, as he ran to a brick structure at the end of the yard. "We've got to make sure of those rascals this time."

The brick building looked like a garage, but as there was no way for a motor car to be got into this yard, Nick knew it could not be used for that purpose. One glance showed him that it was old, and that the brickwork was shaky. There was a door and one window. The window was barred.

Nick decided, after a brief survey, that the bars could be torn loose with some exertion, and he seized one of them with both hands and pulled with all his might. If the detective had not been a man of extraordinary muscular power, perhaps he could not have made the bar yield. As it was, he pulled it out of one end after a few minutes' labor. Then it was comparatively easy to get the other end out.

This left him room to crawl through. As he dropped to the floor, he saw somebody lying on the floor, bound hand and foot, and with a cloth fastened over his mouth, so that he could not utter a sound.

Two or three slashes with his knife, and off came the ropes. At the same time he loosened the suffocating cloth. Then he lifted Chick to his feet. To his joy, he saw that his assistant was not hurt. He was standing up without aid, although obviously he felt very stiff.

"Where are they, Chick? In the house?"

"Yes. There are three of them. Sun Jin, the man with the scars, and another chink."

"And who is the third?" asked Nick Carter.

"Professor Tolo, of course. I tell you, chief, that Jap is one of the worst citizens I ever saw out of jail. He's going to get us all if we don't watch out."

"Is he?" came grimly from the great detective. "I think not. The electric chair will get him."

"It ought to, I believe. But he's smart enough not to do his own job. He never has anything to do with the actual use of the crossed needles, and he is smart enough to make it hard to bring anything definite against him."

While Chick was speaking, he was digging at the lock with his pocketknife, and it was not long before he shot back the lock and pulled the door open.

Patsy Garvan met them as they went out, and, with his usual recklessness where his emotions were concerned, threw his arms around Chick's shoulders, and shouted, in a powerful voice:

"Good old scout! They didn't get you! I saw them, and I would have come over the fence right then if the chief hadn't phoned me to wait. Come on, everybody! This is where we get the Yellow Tong and hang it on the fence to dry, inside out! Wow! Bring on your chinks!"

It was impossible to keep Patsy quiet, as both Nick Carter and Chick well knew. Now that his blood was up, he must be allowed to have his fling, regardless of who might hear him.

"Don't try the door," warned Chick. "They have it locked and barred. But you can get through the kitchen window by just breaking the glass and reaching in to the catch."

"We'll cut a hole. That will be better than making a crash by breaking it," said Nick.

He took from his portable kit of tools a glazier's diamond, and cut a square hole in the glass as neatly as if it were his regular business. He pinched the piece of glass with his nimble fingers before it could fall to the floor inside, and had the catch pushed back almost in the same movement. The next moment he was in the kitchen, pistol in hand, while his two assistants also came through.

So far they had not heard a sound in the house. Yet there could be no question that somebody was there, for only just before Patsy Garvan had seen the three men carrying Chick's bound figure down the yard, to deposit it in the brick tool house.

These three men might have gone out by the front door. But, according to Patsy, the caretaker was still there, because he had come out only a minute before Nick opened the study door. Patsy had watched him from the window, and had seen him go down the yard to look at the outside of the tool house. Then he had sauntered back, lighted a pipe, and gone into the house, smoking, as if he had no intention of moving away—for a while, at all events.

"We've got to get that caretaker, first of all," whispered Nick.

He opened the door of the kitchen that led to the other part of the house, closely followed by his two assistants.

There was a dark hall which seemed to run through to the front door, and the three explorers crept along till they got to another door. When they opened this, they were startled by a rush of sunlight. It gave out upon the little, paved yard in front of the house, with the avenue beyond.

Standing in the yard and leaning over the iron railings, as he puffed at a pipe so strong that it polluted the whole block, was the caretaker. He was enjoying the leisurely panorama of the early morning, apparently with nothing on his mind.

Nick pulled his assistants back to the dark hall, and locked and bolted the door in silence.

"He didn't see us, and we don't want him to come in," he whispered. "We will look through the house. I don't believe those fellows have gone out. It is my opinion they intended to go out to the tool house later and dispose of you, Chick."

"Very likely," assented Chick coolly. "I don't care what they intended, now that I know they won't be able to do it. I'm going upstairs."

"Not without me," grunted Patsy.

Cautiously they crept up to the main floor, and went into the dining room, the door of which was a little way open. The curtains were drawn at the window, but there was enough light for them to see that the furniture was all shrouded in denim, and that the pictures on the walls had been covered with sheets.

The effect was ghostly, but it was natural enough. The owners of the house wanted their belongings to be kept as fresh as possible while they were away.

The other rooms on this floor were also wrapped in cloths, and all were so silent that it was difficult to imagine them full of life and brightness, as probably they were when the family was at home.

To the next floor went the three investigators, and there they found a handsome drawing-room in front and two smaller rooms behind, that probably were used as a cardroom and my lady's special sitting room.

"That's a fine grand piano over there," observed Patsy, in a whisper. "Gee! I'd like to hear some ragtime on that."

Patsy Garvan had a way of being incongruous without knowing it. When an idea came into his head, he was liable to give it utterance, regardless of where he might be.

The piano, covered all over with an immense sheet that hung down on all sides, had attracted his attention to such a degree that it seemed to fascinate him. He tiptoed over the luxurious rugs on the polished floor of the drawing-room until he was close to the piano, and he put his hands on it.

"Say, chief!" he whispered. "I'm just going to open this music box and see how it looks inside."

"Come away!" hissed Chick. "Are you crazy?"

But Patsy either did not hear, or he would not heed. Throwing up the sheet, as well as the rich, brocaded cover underneath, he opened the front of the piano, exposing the keyboard, and the magnificent, pearl-inlaid music desk. Then he spread his fingers over the keys, as if about to play.

Patsy was a fair performer on the piano, as well as on several other instruments. He could hardly resist trying this valuable piano. Only the fear that there might be others in the house besides his two companions, who would perhaps catch them unawares if he were to make a sound on the instrument, held him back.

With a sigh, he put down the lid, and was turning away, when he happened to glance around the side of the piano. It stood across a corner of the room, leaving a space behind, besides diagonal corners on either side.

Without a word, Patsy flung himself into the three-cornered space at the back of the piano, and instantly there was an uproar that made it quite superfluous for Nick and Chick to keep silence any longer.

Patsy struggled out to the middle of the drawing-room. In either hand he held a Chinaman!

"Come on, Chick! Take one of these!" he shouted. "I've got the guy with the white ear. You take the other one! Look out! Behind you!" he added, in a shriek.

It was well that he had uttered this warning. Two other Chinamen had come from the shadows of the other rooms, and each held a knife uplifted.

Before they could bring the knives down, Nick Carter had shot out his left fist and felled one, while Chick floored the other.

But this was not the end of the battle. The two men Patsy had seized at the back of the piano took advantage of the diversion to break away from him, and the next moment he was dashing down the stairs, after them.

The front door was their objective, but it had been locked and bolted just as had the one in the basement that Nick Carter had secured. It was against this door that the fight came to an issue.

Patsy Garvan did not hesitate to rush in. He slammed one of the Chinamen on the chin and crumpled him up. It made him smile with satisfaction as he noted that it was the one with the scarred ear.

Before he could give attention to the other man, that snarling individual had drawn something from the folds

of his blue blouse that glistened evilly in the half light of the hall.

Whatever it was, Patsy determined not to wait for it. Letting fly with his right fist—and missing, as the Chinaman ducked, he seized him by the throat with the other hand. There was a gurgling hiss, and then the fellow went down on top of his fellow rascal.

A scream—loud, long drawn out, and unearthly—came from the man with the scarred ear, who was underneath, and the awful cry was echoed by the Chinaman on top. Then both were still.

Patsy Garvan stood looking at them in astonishment, when Nick Carter came down with a rush and ran to the help of his petrified assistant.

"Got 'em, Patsy?"

"I think so. But they seemed to give out all at once, without me touching them. That is, after I'd slung this one on top of the other."

Nick Carter did not answer, but a look of understanding came into his keen eyes, as he pulled the top Chinaman off of his comrade and laid him on his back. Then he took out his pocket flash and turned it first on one senseless figure, and then the other.

Deeply embedded in the chest of the underneath man—the Chinaman with the scarred ear and the burned finger, from which the rag had been removed—were the poisoned crossed needles with which the detective had become so strangely familiar in the last two days.

He hastily tore open the front of the blouse and shirt away from the chest of the other. There were the two little marks which showed that he, too, had died from the same horrible death as his companion.

"It's clear enough," said Nick quietly. "When you flung this man on top of the other, the needles were driven into both of them. It was poetic justice. The murder of Andrew Anderton has been avenged."

"This one with the scarred ear is the fellow who actually killed Mr. Anderton, wasn't he?" asked Patsy.

"Yes, I have ample proof of that. This other man was concerned in it, too. The only thing I want now is to get the archconspirator—the man who arranged the murder—Sang Tu."

"You mean Professor Tolo, don't you?" asked Patsy.

"It may turn out to be the same thing," returned Nick Carter. "We shall have to find that out later. Hello, Chick!" he called up the stairs. "Have you got those two fellows, all right?"

"Yes," replied Chick. "I have handcuffs on both of them. What am I to do with them now?"

"I'll go out and grab that caretaker. Then I'll bring him in and make him telephone to the police station for a patrol wagon. I don't know how deep he is in this thing. He can explain that to the police."

"Why don't you telephone, yourself, chief?" asked Chick. "They'd probably pay more attention to you than to the old man."

"Yes, and they'd question me more than I care for, too," replied Nick. "I don't want to answer questions until I am face to face with the man who asks them. This case isn't wound up yet, you know."

THE END.

"The Forced Crime; or, Nick Carter's Brazen Clew," will be the title of the long, complete story which you will read in the next issue, No. 152, of the NICK CARTER STORIES, out August 7th. In the forthcoming story you will find more of the adventures of the famous detective in running down the members of the Yellow Tong. Then, too, you will also find several articles of interest, together with an installment of the serial now appearing.

Sheridan of the U. S. Mail.

By RALPH BOSTON.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 143 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WOMAN IN THE CASE.

"I'm a fine sort of lover," Owen muttered to himself, with a mirthless laugh, as he left the post office, and proceeded to the residence of the Reverend Doctor Moore. "A man ought to believe in the girl he loves, no matter who else he has to doubt in order to do so; yet here I am giving the preference to Pop Andrews, refusing to believe that there's any possibility of his being a liar and a thief, when I know very well that either that must be the case, or else Dallas must be guilty."

But although he argued this with himself, Owen realized that it was not a matter of sentiment, but of cold logic, which had caused him to decide in favor of the veteran letter carrier.

In a very despondent frame of mind, Owen rang the doorbell of the clergyman's house, hoping that the reverend gentleman might be able to tell him something—some little detail which he had not thought to mention to Superintendent Henderson—which might put an entirely new complexion on the case, and enable him to solve the mystery without accusing either Dallas or the letter carrier.

He found that Doctor Moore was a pleasant little man, several years past middle age, with a kindly smile and an air of unworldliness which the inspector was not surprised to find in a man who would send a hundred-dollar note in an unregistered letter.

Owen explained the object of his call, and the clergyman readily agreed to give him all the assistance he could in solving the mystery.

"In the first place," said Owen, "did anybody know, doctor, that you were sending this money through the mail? I mean to say, was anybody aware of the fact before you dropped the letter in the box? Some dishonest person might have followed you, and fished the letter out of the box as soon as you stepped away?"

"No," answered Doctor Moore. "I don't think that's possible. I didn't mention the fact that I was sending that money to anybody—not even to Mrs. Moore."

"And you are quite sure that it went into the box all right? Some people are very careless, you know, when they mail letters. Sometimes, instead of going into the box, the letter slips to the sidewalk unnoticed."

"No, I am quite sure that wasn't the case with me," the clergyman replied smilingly. "I remember that I was particularly careful to see that the letter went to the bottom of the box. I even took the precaution of peering into the slot after I had deposited it, to make sure that it had gone all the way down. I know letters some-

times stick in the slot cover, and, as this one contained money, I was especially careful in that respect."

"And you are equally positive that it was a pink envelope, are you, doctor? It couldn't possibly have been any other color?"

"I am quite certain that it was pink. To prove to you that I couldn't possibly be mistaken on that point, I might repeat to you a little pun I made to the young lady who gave me the envelope. I said to her: 'I guess the person who receives this will consider it the pink of perfection.' Now, it stands to reason I couldn't have made that pun if the envelope had been of any other color, doesn't it?"

"The young lady who gave you the envelope?" repeated Owen, seizing quickly upon these words. "May I ask you to explain what you mean by that, sir? Who was this young lady?"

The clergyman smiled. "Why, yes, to be sure! How stupid of me! I am afraid that when I answered you a little while ago that nobody knew of my intention to mail the hundred-dollar bill, I was not quite accurate. On second thought, there was one person who saw me put the money into the envelope."

"And who was that person?" demanded Owen eagerly.

"The young lady who gave me the envelope; she is employed as a typewriter in my friend Mr. Sammis' office. It would be quite out of the question, of course, to suspect her of fishing the letter out of the box."

The clergyman laughed lightly.

Owen did not echo his laugh. He stared at him in astonishment. "You mean to tell me, doctor, that you got that envelope from her?"

"Yes; let me explain how that happened: You see, originally the letter and money were in a white envelope—one of my own. I had it in my pocket when I reached Mr. Sammis' office. I was going there to see him about church affairs, you know. The sight of the street letter box outside his office suddenly reminded me that I hadn't mailed that letter. I took it out of my pocket, with the intention of doing so immediately, when it slipped from my hand and fell to the sidewalk. It had been raining quite heavily, and the sidewalks were very muddy. Of course, the letter fell address side downward—letters always do seem to fall that way, especially when it's muddy—and when I picked it up I saw that it was not in a condition to send through the mails; the writing on the envelope was all blurred. So I stepped into the real-estate office, and requested the young lady seated at the typewriter to let me have a plain envelope. She had a box of square pink envelopes on the desk—her own private stationery, I presume—and she handed me one of those, explaining that it was the only kind she had which didn't bear Mr. Sammis' business card. I told her that would do very nicely. It was then I made that little joking remark that the color was most appropriate, as the person who received it would think it the pink of perfection."

"And you put the money in the envelope in her presence?" exclaimed Owen gloomily.

"Yes, of course! Why shouldn't I have done so? Bless my soul! You don't think for a minute that a nice young woman like that wasn't to be trusted, do you?"

A happy thought suddenly occurred to Owen. A plausible explanation of the mystery flashed through his mind. He believed he understood now why Dallas had afterward sought to get possession of that letter.

"You say that she took the envelope from a box of private stationery which she had on her desk, Doctor Moore?" he inquired breathlessly.

"Yes; but really I cannot understand why you should lay such stress upon this unimportant incident." The clergyman had not yet heard Pop Andrews' story about handing the missing letter to Dallas, and consequently had no idea what Owen was getting at.

It had occurred to the inspector that it was quite possible that Dallas, intending to give Doctor Moore an empty envelope, had unwittingly handed him one which contained something of great value to her. She had not discovered her mistake until after the clergyman had dropped the letter into the box. Then, determined to get her property back, she had waited for the postman, and told him that little fib about the letter being hers, realizing that Pop Andrews would have refused to hand it to her if she had told him the truth.

That must be the solution to the mystery, thought Owen, and he drew a deep breath of relief. Dallas had acted unlawfully, of course, in claiming and opening a letter which was not hers; but, if this theory was correct, the circumstances were extenuating, and the thing wasn't nearly as serious as it had looked.

"Don't you think it possible," asked Sheridan, turning eagerly to Doctor Moore "that there was something in that pink envelope which she handed to you—a slip of paper or something of that sort? You wouldn't have noticed that, of course."

"On the contrary," replied the clergyman, with a smile, "I surely would have noticed it. I can't imagine what you are driving at, my friend; but I am quite positive that the envelope she handed to me was empty."

"What makes you so sure of that?" demanded Owen incredulously.

"Because," came the slowly delivered answer, "I recall distinctly that, I held the envelope up against the electric light. You see, it looked to me as if the paper it was made of was exceedingly thin, and I thought there might be a possibility of that hundred-dollar bill showing through and attracting attention, so I held the empty envelope against the electric globe to ascertain just how transparent it really was. I could see right through it, and if there had been any object inside, I should surely have noticed it and called the young lady's attention to it."

Owen's heart sank into his boots as this hope was dispelled. He walked out of the clergyman's house more dejected than when he had entered it. Gloomily he wended his way to the real-estate office of Walter K. Sammis.

"Any word of Miss Worthington?" he inquired of the girl's employer.

"No," replied Mr. Sammis, with a frown; "and I can't understand what's happened to her. I sent around to her boarding house, just now, and they say that she isn't there—hasn't been there since yesterday evening. It's really very strange that she should be absent like this, without leaving me any word.

"Surely," he muttered, speaking more to himself than to Owen, "the little row we had yesterday afternoon can't have anything to do with it?"

"The little row?" repeated Sheridan quickly.

Mr. Sammis frowned. "Yes; Miss Worthington and I had a little difference; but I scarcely think that was enough to make her go off and leave me in the lurch like this. It was over a financial matter. She requested me to advance her fifty dollars—said she was badly in need of the money, and offered to pay it off in weekly installments, out of her wages. I told her that I regretted that I could not consent to such an unbusinesslike arrangement."

Owen glared at the real-estate man. He knew that Sammis was close-fisted, but he could not imagine any man refusing such a slight favor to an employee as faithful and industrious as Dallas had always been.

"And you wouldn't let her have the money?" he exclaimed scornfully.

"No; I told her that I couldn't see my way clear to do so. You see, I've had heavy expenses lately, and, anyway, I have——"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Sammis," Sheridan interrupted hotly. "Whatever that poor little girl has done, in her desperation, you're responsible for."

He strode indignantly out of the place, more discouraged than ever. Matters were getting worse and worse. Everything seemed to point to Dallas' guilt.

He went once more to the girl's boarding-house, hoping against hope that he might find her there, although he knew very well that his errand would be in vain.

"Heard anything from Miss Worthington?" he inquired of the landlady.

"Nothing at all, Mr. Sheridan. There was somebody from her place of employment inquiring about her half an hour ago. Ain't it queer that she should have disappeared like this?"

"I'd like to go upstairs to her room," said Owen, an idea suddenly striking him.

"Well, I don't know about that, Mr. Sheridan," said the landlady. "It seems to me it would scarcely be proper——"

She stopped short as her astonished gaze fell upon the shining badge which Owen suddenly displayed.

"I'm not here in a personal capacity, Mrs. O'Brien," he said. "I'm here as a representative of the United States government, and I demand the privilege of inspecting Miss Worthington's room."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the woman. "The United States government! Dear me, what can it all mean? Why, certainly, Mr. Sheridan. Under those circumstances, will you please step this way?"

Owen followed her upstairs, feeling almost ashamed of himself that he was offering this indignity to the girl he was going to make his wife. But it had occurred to him that perhaps in Dallas' room he might find some clew to her present whereabouts, and he was determined to find her.

And the very first thing his gaze fell upon as he entered the room was a waste-paper basket, in which were the pieces of a torn pink envelope.

There were only four pieces, and it was an easy matter for Owen to put them together and to read the address.

He uttered a groan of anguish and despair as he did so. The pink envelope, the stamp of which had not been canceled, was addressed in a man's handwriting to the person in Pennsylvania to whom the Reverend Doctor Moore had mailed the hundred-dollar note.

It was no longer possible to doubt that Dallas was guilty of robbing the United States mails.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

Convinced now of the girl's guilt, Owen Sheridan was walking dejectedly out of the room, when suddenly he remembered that he had not carried out his intention of searching for some clew as to Dallas' whereabouts.

He returned to the waste-paper basket, which was half full of litter, and emptied its contents on the floor. Some fragments of paper with blue printing on them caught his eye. He recognized them as being parts of the top of a telegraph blank.

There was a pad of Postal Telegraph sending blanks on a small writing desk in a corner of the room. It occurred to Owen that Dallas might have written out a message with the intention of sending it over the wire, then changed her mind and torn up what she had written. He began eagerly to pick the rest of the pieces from the heap of rubbish, and soon had the complete telegram.

It consisted of two lines in the girl's handwriting, which he recognized immediately. The torn-up message was addressed to Chester Worthington, 89 Dulwich Street, Chicago, and read:

"Disregard my letter. Am coming to you immediately. Don't do anything rash. Will do my utmost to help you.

"DALLAS."

"Ah," exclaimed Sheridan, "I guess this explains where she has gone—and why. That scapegrace brother of hers has got into trouble again, and she has gone out there to help him. And I suppose she used that hundred-dollar bill to pay her fare. Yes, that must be it. She tried to borrow the price of the train ticket from her employer, and when he refused, the poor girl, in her desperation, yielded to the temptation to steal that letter."

For several minutes he sat staring miserably at the telegram which he had pieced together on the writing desk; then he rose abruptly, and, thrusting the fragments of paper into his pocket, moved toward the door, a look of determination in his eyes.

By the time he reached the street his mind was fully made up as to the course he would pursue. He intended to go back to the chief inspector, and report that he had failed to solve the mystery of the missing pink envelope; and, moreover, he would say nothing about the telegram he had found in Dallas' room, so that if others were put on the case they would be unable to get on the track of the girl.

The chief would sneer at him, no doubt, for falling down on his very first case; but he wouldn't mind that as long as Dallas escaped punishment for an offense which he could not believe her guilty of, in spite of the evidence he had obtained.

"And, of course, I'm going to hand in my resignation from the postal service, to take effect at once," he told himself. "I couldn't very well continue in the employ of the United States government after helping to defeat the ends of justice."

"Hello!" exclaimed a cheery voice, as Owen turned

the street corner, so wrapped up in his gloomy meditations that he almost collided with the speaker. "And how's our young post-office inspector to-day? Not on the trail of malefactors already, I'll wager. From your preoccupied air and the frown upon your countenance, Owen, it must be a perplexing problem you're wrestling with."

Owen looked into the smiling countenance of ex-Judge Sugden Lawrence, the kind friend whose influence had enabled him to land the government job which he now contemplated resigning.

Acting on an impulse, Sheridan decided to take the lawyer into his confidence. He knew that the latter could be trusted not to betray Dallas' secret.

"It is a perplexing problem I'm wrestling with, judge," he said; "one of the most unpleasant a fellow was ever up against."

"Official or personal?" inquired the lawyer.

"Both," answered Owen grimly. "And that's where the trouble comes in. It's the personal element in this case which makes it impossible for me to do my duty."

The judge frowned, and looked at him disapprovingly. "Impossible to do your duty, Owen? I'm sorry to hear you talk like that. If I thought that you really meant it, I should regret very much that I had assisted you to become a post-office inspector. No personal considerations should ever cause an officer of the law to shirk his duty."

"That's all very well to say," returned the inspector; "but an officer of the law is human, just like everybody else, and it isn't reasonable to ask him to arrest the girl he loves."

"What!" exclaimed Judge Lawrence, in astonishment. "Arrest Miss Worthington? What on earth for?"

In a few words Owen sadly explained to him the nature of his first assignment as a post-office inspector. The lawyer listened with growing amazement.

"This is really most extraordinary! I cannot bring myself to believe that that young woman could be a thief. Come on downtown with me to my office, Owen, and let us talk this case over. Perhaps by putting our heads together we shall be able to convince ourselves of your fiancée's innocence."

Half an hour later they sat in the lawyer's private office, and Owen narrated every detail of the case, and displayed the incriminating envelope and the telegram, which he pieced together on Judge Lawrence's desk.

"It is really very strange," declared the judge. "Looking at all the evidence from the standpoint of a lawyer, I should have no hesitancy in declaring that the young woman must be guilty. And yet——" He stopped short, and, leaning back in his chair, gazed dreamily toward the ceiling.

"And yet what?" queried Owen eagerly.

"I was just thinking of a scene which took place in this office a few months ago. It was almost the same scene as is being enacted here now; only, in that instance, Miss Worthington sat in the chair which you now occupy, and you were the subject under discussion."

He smiled whimsically. "And I couldn't help thinking, my dear Owen, as that scene came back to me, how very much superior the other sex is to ours when it comes to loyalty and faith. I remember that Miss Worthington, that day, refused even to consider the possibility of your being guilty. She declared that no matter what evidence might be brought against you, she would never believe that you were a thief."

Owen flushed painfully, and a tender look came to his eyes. "Dear little girl," he murmured; "I'm a brute to doubt her. But the evidence is convincing, judge. You must admit that there is no——"

"The evidence in your case—the circumstantial evidence—appeared to be equally convincing, Owen," interrupted the judge. "Yet she refused to accept it; and it turned out afterward that her faith was not misplaced."

Sheridan looked at him eagerly. "Then you really think that there's a chance of her being innocent?"

"I do. Your own narrow escape ought to have taught you that there is always a chance of circumstantial evidence leading to a wrong conclusion. Now, there is one thing about that telegram which you found in the waste-paper basket which, in my opinion, indicates that Miss Worthington did not steal the pink envelope. Apparently it is a point which has escaped your observation."

"What do you mean, judge?" inquired Owen breathlessly.

"I refer to the opening words of that message: 'Disregard my letter,' she telegraphs to her brother. Now, doesn't that look as if she may have been telling the truth when she stated to Carrier Andrews that she had dropped into that mail box a letter which she had changed her mind about sending? Doesn't it look as if the opening words of her telegram have reference to that letter?"

A look of joy came to Owen's face. "By Jove, yes!" he exclaimed. "I think I see it now, judge. Dallas didn't mean to steal the Reverend Doctor Moore's letter. She was after the one which she had dropped in the box—the one to her brother in Chicago. She got the other pink envelope by mistake. Yes, that must be it, of course. She didn't discover her error until she reached home; then, realizing that it was too late to stop that letter to her brother, she sat down and wrote him that telegram. The whole thing's as clear as daylight now. I'm mighty glad that I met you to-day, judge."

Then suddenly all the joy departed from Sheridan's face. "But no, it couldn't have been that way, after all," he went on, with a sigh of disappointment. "That theory won't go; we're overlooking two things."

"What are they?"

"In the first place, she didn't send that telegram to her brother, after all. If she had I wouldn't have found it in the basket."

"Pooh! That argument's easily met. She may have sent another message. Women generally write a telegram over three or four times before they're satisfied with the wording of it, you know. Or she may have decided that, as she was going out to Chicago, there was no need of telegraphing. Probably she figured on getting there almost as soon as her letter."

"Yes," Owen admitted; "of course, that's logical enough. But my other argument isn't so easily disposed of. I'm afraid it knocks out our theory."

"What is it?"

"If Dallas got the clergyman's letter by an innocent mistake, what became of her letter—the one she really wanted? There was no other pink envelope in that box. There would have been if she had been telling the truth when she said she mailed it."

The judge gazed thoughtfully at the ceiling. "Yes, that is a stumper, I must admit. But," he added, "maybe

Miss Worthington could explain that. I feel confident that she could. Why don't you go to Chicago on the very next train and ask her, Inspector Sheridan? I wouldn't lose any time in clearing this thing up if I were you."

"But suppose I ask her, and she admits——"

"Bah!" interrupted the lawyer impatiently; "shame on you for an unworthy lover! I'm willing to wager everything I've got that that little girl won't admit to you that she's a thief—because she won't have to."

His confident air was infectious. "Thank you!" said Owen. "You're quite right, of course. Dallas couldn't be a thief! I'm going to take the first train out."

CHAPTER XX.

SHOWING THEM.

When Owen Sheridan arrived at Chicago, the following day, he proceeded at once to the address given in the telegram. He guessed that this was the boarding house in which Chester Worthington, Dallas' brother, resided, and as it was Sunday, there would be, of course, no use in looking up that young man at his place of business.

No. 89 Dulwich Street proved to be a nice-looking house on a quiet street. Owen hoped to find Dallas there, for it seemed probable that the girl while in Chicago would stay under the same roof as her brother. But as he drew near he suddenly stopped short, and, uttering an exclamation of astonishment, darted into a convenient doorway to avoid being seen by a man who was ascending the stoop.

This man was stout, red-faced, flashily dressed, and wore a gaudy necktie, from the center of which flashed a huge diamond. It was the sight of him which had caused Owen such agitation, for he recognized the fellow immediately as Jake Hines, fugitive from justice, and his unsuccessful rival in love.

"Good heavens!" gasped Owen. "What can this mean? Is it possible that the rascal can have anything to do with Dallas' coming to Chicago? It's a lucky thing I'm here."

He waited until the door of No. 89 had closed behind Hines, then he came out of his place of concealment, and hurried toward the house. A pleasant-looking woman responded to his ring at the doorbell, and he questioned her abruptly: "That man who just came in here—where did he go?"

"You mean Mr. Fitzgerald, I presume?"

"That's probably the name he goes under," said Owen, realizing that it was not unlikely that Mr. Hines, being a fugitive from justice, had assumed an alias. "Does he reside here?"

The woman regarded her excited visitor with cold suspicion. "Before I answer any questions, sir, I must know who you are and what business——"

Owen, without waiting for her to finish, displayed his badge, at sight of which her manner changed.

"Oh, is that the kind of a man Mr. Fitzgerald is?" she exclaimed. "Well, I'm not surprised to hear it. I took a dislike to him the first time I saw him."

"Oh, then he does live here?"

"No; but he comes here quite often to visit one of our boarders, sir—a Mr. Worthington—and it's up to his room that he's gone now."

"And is Miss—— Is anybody else up there with them?" inquired Owen, with great eagerness.

"Yes, sir; Mr. Worthington's sister from New York. She arrived here yesterday, and has the room next to her brother's. She's up in her room now—the second-floor rear—and——"

Without waiting to hear any more Owen rushed up the stairway, and paused before a closed door, from behind which the deep voice of Jake Hines could be plainly heard.

CHAPTER XXI.

TRUE TO HIS COLORS.

Owen Sheridan's first impulse was to burst into the room. The mere voice of Jake Hines was like a challenge to him, filling him with suspicion and indignation. But in his work as a post-office inspector, discretion and caution were rapidly becoming habitual with him, and he waited quietly to learn what new rôle was being enacted by the young politician beyond the door.

"I tell you, Dallas," Hines was saying, "it's the only chance of savin' your brother from goin' to jail. If you're the right kind of a sister, you won't hesitate for a minute. What's a little thing like marryin' me compared to seein' your brother in stripes?"

"Yes, Dallas," said another masculine voice imploringly; "what Jake says is so. It depends entirely upon you whether I go to jail or not. The shortage hasn't been discovered yet; but the auditor is due at the office next week, and as soon as he gets at the books I'm done for—unless I can replace the five thousand dollars before then."

"And I've got the money right here," said Hines. "Five thousand dollars in bills, girlie. All you've got to do is to promise to marry me, and as soon as the license is made out I'll hand the roll to your brother, and he'll be safe."

"And it'll be the last time I'll enter a gambling house; I'll promise you that, Dallas!" declared young Worthington. "You see me out of this scrape, and I'll go straight from now on. You'll do me this favor, won't you, sis? You're not going to be stubborn, and see your brother sent to prison. You're the only one that can save me, Dallas. It's entirely up to you?"

"But, Chester," came the tremulous voice of Dallas, "what you ask is quite impossible. I couldn't marry this man, even to save you from disgrace and imprisonment. I really couldn't do it, Chester. I'd do anything else in my power to help you, dear; but that's out of the question."

"And why is it out of the question, I should like to know?" exclaimed Hines, in an injured tone. "I ain't such a bad feller, Dallas. There's lots worse than me, I guess. To hear her talk, Chester, you'd think I was the worst demon that ever grew in the garden of love, wouldn't you?"

"Jake has been a mighty good friend to me, sis," declared young Worthington warmly. "It's true I've only known him a few months, but that's long enough for me to find out that he's one of the best fellows in the whole world. He's loaned me a lot of money already, and now that I'm in this big trouble he comes forward generously and offers to let me have the five thousand dollars to make good the shortage——"

"Under the conditions mentioned," interpolated Mr. Hines hastily.

"Under the conditions mentioned, of course," said young Worthington. "But, nevertheless, it's a mighty generous offer. The conditions are ridiculously easy, Dallas. I'm sure Jake will make a mighty good husband, and you'd never regret marrying him. He's very much in love with you. He's done nothing but talk about you ever since I've known him. He's just crazy about you."

"And I suppose," said Dallas scornfully, "it was he who suggested that you send me that mysterious and startling letter which brought me to Chicago without letting a single person in New York—not even my employer—know about it? Yes, I am quite sure that is some of Mr. Hines' work. If I had suspected for a minute that I should find him here, Chester, I wouldn't have changed my mind after writing you that I couldn't come to you."

"Ah," said Owen to himself, "so she wrote to her brother telling him that she couldn't come to him, and then she changed her mind. That, of course, must have been the letter which she tried to get out of the mail, and, by an unfortunate mistake, got the Reverend Doctor Moore's pink envelope, with its hundred-dollar inclosure, instead."

Owen disliked to play the rôle of eavesdropper, but he couldn't help waiting a little longer outside that door before making his presence known to the occupants of the room. He wanted his entry to come as a startling climax to one of Mr. Hines' little speeches.

He did not have long to wait. "Well, Dallas," he heard Hines exclaim, suddenly assuming a bullying tone, "it's no use havin' any more argument about this matter. I hold all the cards in this game. I know very well that you ain't the kind of girl to let your brother go to jail when it lies in your power to save him; so you've got to accept my proposition whether you like it or not. As I told you once before, when Jake Hines wants a thing bad he generally manages to get it. You know—— Hello!"

His little, beady eyes opened wide with astonishment and alarm as the door suddenly flew open, and Post-office Inspector Owen Sheridan stepped into the room.

"Well, for the love of Mike!" gasped Jake, and as he spoke he fell back a step, and his right hand moved toward his hip pocket.

Owen did not fail to grasp the significance of this gesture. "Keep your hands in front of you, Hines," he said quietly. "It's no use. I've got you covered."

Owen's right hand was thrust within the side pocket of his coat. The pocket bulged as though it might contain something else besides the hand. Hines noted that bulge, and obediently kept his hands in front of him.

"Got me covered, have you?" he grunted. "Well, I'm from Missouri. You gotter show me. I've heard of that bluff bein' pulled off before now with a pipe or a nail file."

Owen laughed. "All right; I'll show you. Does this look like a pipe or a nail file, Jake?"

Hines' small eyes blinked at sight of the revolver which came quickly from Owen's coat pocket. "No, that's the goods," he said gloomily. "I guess I'm up against it. Was you sent to Chicago specially to get me, Sheridan?"

"Not exactly," replied Owen, with a glance toward Dallas; "I came here mainly to look into another case; but I guess that can wait until I've got you safely locked up."

"Well, as long as you wasn't sent to get me," said Hines eagerly, "perhaps you'll be interested in a little proposition I'm goin' to make."

He, too, glanced toward Dallas. "I've got five thousand dollars in bills in my pocket, Sheridan. That money'd come in mighty useful to Miss Worthington just now. It would save her brother from a long term in jail. I'll hand it over to her if you'll let me walk out of that door alone. Is it a bargain?"

"It is not," said Dallas, before the post-office inspector could answer. "You've got to do your duty, Owen. Don't listen to any proposal."

Owen gave her a grateful and admiring glance. "That's fine of you, Dallas. Of course, there's no danger of my accepting this bribe. I scarcely think, though, that your brother will have to go to jail for the lack of that money. I don't believe that he's short five thousand dollars at the office at all. I've got a shrewd suspicion that these rascals invented that yarn, and have been trying to work a cunning game on you."

It was only a guess, of course, but Owen could see from the discomfited and sheepish look that came to young Worthington's face that he had guessed right.

TO BE CONTINUED.

WHO IS IT?

A laughable illustration of how anger causes a man to make himself ridiculous is given in the following incident, related in a German newspaper:

Banker Rosenthal directed his bookkeeper to address a sharp letter to Baron Y——, who had promised several times to pay what he owed, and had as often neglected to do so.

When the letter was written, it did not please Banker Rosenthal, who is very excitable, and he angrily penned the following:

"Dear Baron Y——: Who was it that promised to pay up on the 1st of January? You, my dear baron, you are the man. Who was it that promised, then, to settle on the 1st of March? You, my dear baron. Who was it that didn't settle on the 1st of March? You, my dear baron. Who is it, then, who has broken his word twice, and is an unmitigated scoundrel? Your obedient servant, Moses Rosenthal."

BEING CHEERFUL AT MEALS.

A man read in the paper that the family table should always be the scene of laughter and merriment, and that no meal should be passed in the moody silence that so often characterizes such occasions. The idea struck him so favorably that when his family had gathered round the table that evening, he said:

"Now, this sort of thing of keeping so silent at meals has got to stop. You hear me, you girls? You begin to tell stories, and keep up an agreeable sort of talk; and you, boys, laugh and be jolly, or I'll take and dust your jackets till you can't stand. Now, begin!"

The glare that he sent around the table made the family resemble a funeral party.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Washer with Heater.

A new device that lessens the drudgery of wash day is the combination washer and stove. It is made entirely of metal. The advantage of having the fire under the wash water is that it enables the cleansing to be done better and more quickly; it is not necessary to carry water from the stove to the place where the washing is done. A few minutes' pumping on the handle is said to drive the dirt from the clothes, linens, or other fabrics in the washer.

$686,700,000 Paid in Life Insurance.

Distribution of life-insurance companies and organizations in the United States and Canada during 1914 amounted to $686,700,000. This is the largest annual amount on record, exceeding by $40,150,000 the amount paid in 1913.

Claims paid in the United States and Canada, $433,050,000.

Payments for premium savings and surrender values, and to annuitants, and in foreign countries, $253,650,000. Grand total, $686,700,000.

While the amount paid by the companies was more, the amount of ordinary and industrial policies written and revived in the United States during 1914 fell off slightly last year. Until the outbreak of war in Europe, the writing of life insurance exceeded the normal rate of increase.

The largest claim paid last year was on the policy of George W. Vanderbilt, whose residence was in Washington. The company that issued it reinsured $750,000 of the face amount. Mr. Vanderbilt carried the policy on the twenty-payment life plan for seventeen years. During that period he paid premiums to the amount of $595,000.

A Fearful Aspect, at Least.

"George," she screamed; "my neck!"

"What's the matter?"

"There's a pillacatter——"

"A what?"

"A tap-e-killer——"

"What in the world do you mean?"

"Oh, dear!" she moaned, as she clutched him frantically; "a kitterpaller! You know, George! A patterkiller on my neck!"

"Oh!" said George, with evident relief, and he proceeded to brush the future butterfly away.

Who Was First Under Wire?

In the northern part of Lansing, Mich., a resident had trouble keeping thoughtless pedestrians and bike riders from cutting across a corner of her lawn. A path was worn smooth across this particular corner. Signs did no good, and personal requests were unheeded. So the resident, not having any males in the family to talk sternly to trespassers, stretched several strands of wire between trees and directly across the path.

The wire was not put up until late in the afternoon. The next day the owner of the path-worn lawn went out to take a look. The new wires were badly bent, as though they had seen hard usage. Evidently they had, for near one tree was found a well-smashed dinner pail, with broken dishes about and near it a set of "store teeth." Part of a bicycle lamp lay on another side of the path, with the rim of a derby. Evidently bikes, as well as ships, sometimes have a hard time passing in the night.

End All Debts in One Week.

It is a custom of the Chinese to pay all their debts on New Year's Day and start the year with a clean slate. The people of Hume, Mo., believe that to be a good plan and conducive to a more neighborly feeling, so the present week has been set aside here as "pay-up" week. During this time everybody is expected to pay all debts, return everything they have borrowed, and, in general, square up every account that is outstanding against them.

At the same time it is hoped that the "paying up" will extend somewhat beyond the commercial side and result in the settlement of all personal differences and general reconciliation of those who have been at outs.

Ohio on the Pension Roll.

Ohio ranks first in the number of her sons on the pension roll, with 74,250, with Pennsylvania a close second and New York third.

She Missed the Seat.

Mrs. J. V. Percal, of Cleveland, Ohio, found the film play featuring her favorite movie hero had just started when she entered a downtown theater Sunday.

And the theater was a bit darker than usual.

She made her way to a seat, removed her hat, and started to pin it to the back of the seat in front of her, all this with her eyes fixed on the opening scene of "The Avenging Hand."

A man sitting in front of her jumped like a scared cat and yelled, "Wow!"

"When I jabbed the hatpin through my hat, I must have missed the back of the seat," explained Mrs. Percal.

"What did the man say?"

"Oh, mercy! Please excuse me."

Expert Rider Postmistress.

Miss Marion Carterett, of Elko, Nev., champion woman "bronchobuster" of Nevada, who won her spurs in open competition with cowgirls from all over the West in the kicking contests at Elko last year, has been appointed postmistress at Deeth. Miss Carterett's appointment was confirmed last month, and she has assumed charge of the office.

Death Rate in Large Cities.

The death rate after the age of forty is increasing annually in Chicago and other large cities in spite of sanitary modes of living and greater protection against communicable diseases. The expectation of life after forty years is less than it was thirty years ago.

In a warning sounded by the public-health service, it is explained this alarming condition is due largely to the increased prevalence of the diseases of degeneration. The

muscles, arteries, and other organs of those who, as a result of sedentary occupation or indolence, take too little exercise degenerate. The advice of the public-health experts is to take exercise.

Baby Chokes on Prune Seed.

A prune seed, which lodged in his throat, caused the death of Frederick Pellegrini, three-year-old son of John Pellegrini, of Denver, Col. The lad choked to death while a physician was en route to the house from the County Hospital.

She Had Right, Says Court.

The proper way to end an engagement to wed was much discussed in the court of Judge Frederickson, in Los Angeles, Cal. Mrs. Grace Gore contended that she was within her rights when she swallowed the diamond ring presented by Luther Buntin, but that the pugilistic retort of Buntin was too much. The court agreed, and fined Buntin thirty dollars.

The story of the courtship was a "thriller." The two met at a dance. Each thought the other single. Buntin, a street-car conductor, took the pretty young woman for frequent street-car rides. One night he gave her the ring.

A few nights later Isadore Gore, in the rôle of irate husband, pounced on him and sent him to the hospital for two weeks.

When Buntin emerged from bandages and plaster, he sought Mrs. Gore and demanded the ring. She refused, swallowed it, and he admits his reply to a merry laugh was a series of stinging slaps.

Double Chicken Is Hatched.

A chicken hatched in Big Piney, Mo., at the home of Mrs. Maud Vaughn, had four legs, four wings, and two tails. It had but one head, but the body was like that of what might be called a double chicken. It could not walk. Its head was between its two bodies.

Students of Baby Culture.

Not only may Los Angeles, Cal., girls learn to cook and sew in the public schools, but they may become students of baby culture with real live, gurgling, wriggling babies to practice on.

A course in the care and nursing of infants has been added as a permanent feature of the curriculum of the Polytechnic night school, and the first class, numbering thirty-five pupils, includes a dozen young mothers and prospective brides as well as younger girls.

Bird Is Killed by Golf Ball.

While "teeing off" at golf, S. C. Pettit, of Topeka, Kan., brought down a sparrow with the flying ball. The bird was dead when it reached the ground. It is said by golfers that such an incident has occurred only once before. A professional golfer on a large course in New England once killed a bird with a golf ball.

Bird Rings Burglar Alarm.

A mischievous bird known as a flicker, belonging to the woodpecker family, has taken a fancy to sounding a burglar alarm over the First National Bank at Wrightsville, Pa. The first time or two the bird indulged in this prank it caused a stir in the neighborhood. It is thought that in the first place an insect on the surface of the gong was pecked by the bird, and in this way the bird became acquainted with the musical qualities of the bell. The beating of the bird's bill on the bell produces a sound exactly like that produced by the electric tapper of the gong.

Mouse Scares Girl to Death.

Miss Edna Engel, of Kenosha, Wis., the seventeen-year-old daughter of Caspar Engel, was scared to death by a mouse. The mouse ran out from under a piece of furniture as she entered her room. The girl fell unconscious and died without regaining consciousness.

An Expectant Fruit Grower.

Enos Martin is showing visitors to his farm near Benzonia, Mich., what he thinks will be the greatest horticultural curiosity in the country.

Last June, when the big wind cut through Benzie County, it hit Enos' peach orchard. After the storm, Enos discovered a stem of a weed driven entirely through the body of one of his best peach trees.

This spring Enos found the weed stem was putting out leaves. He has discovered that it is a milkweed, and he thinks it will unite with the peach, and that next August he can serve peaches and cream from the same tree.

Keen-eared Night Captain.

But for the acute hearing of Night Captain Bert Weare, of Minneapolis, Minn., John Kent might not be occupying a cell in the city jail. He is charged with petty larceny.

Kent was arrested in company with A. W. Hinkley on complaint of E. G. White. White said he met the men in the morning, and that while he dozed in a chair in a saloon, his watch was stolen. He accused Kent.

Kent was searched at police headquarters but the watch was not found. The police were about to turn the men loose, when Captain Weare said he heard a watch ticking. The ticking was traced to Kent's left sock. White and Hinkley were held as witnesses.

Farmers Strong with Autos.

An interesting fact connected with the figures compiled by the assessors in Atchison County, Kan., is that two-thirds of the automobiles in the county are owned by farmers. The aggregate value of the machines in the county is $174,111, of $311 apiece.

Four-legged, Four-winged Chicken.

A chicken with four perfect legs and an extra pair of wings, one of the most remarkable ever hatched in the State, is drawing scores of people to the poultry farm of A. J. and P. J. Fayette, near Stoneham, Mass. The chick has been named "Daisy."

Wonderful in His Work with Penknife.

E. G. van Zandt, of North Euclid Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., exponent of the penknife in art, has just completed his latest work, a complete model of a fourteen-room residence, which is a remarkable demonstration of what can be accomplished with an ordinary penknife.

In October, Van Zandt, who is sixty-two years old and a retired mechanical engineer, was confined to his home with bronchitis. Work with his pocketknife has been his

hobby since boyhood, and when he found that he was to be shut in for the winter, he made a workshop of his sick room.

His workshop requires little space. It is composed of a biscuit board, which he uses as his bench; a sharp pocketknife, and a pot of glue. Cigar boxes are his material.

The model of the home is four inches tall, four inches wide, and six and one-half inches long, and weighs, exclusive of the base, exactly three ounces. It required one hundred and fifteen days' labor, and seven cigar boxes were used in its construction.

The model also includes a garage and shelter shed used in the rear and a private playground. The "estate" is surrounded by a fence, made to represent cobblestones embedded in cement.

The model is complete in every detail, even to doorknobs and hinges. There are eight thousand separate pieces of wood used in its construction. There are thirty-two windows and nine doors in the house. In the windows each sash is separate and each is fitted with glass. The upper sashes have shades. The doors are paneled.

There is an outside breakfast room with a tile floor. Tile also is shown in the vestibule at the front entrance, and the front door is fitted with decorative hinges and a fancy lock. In the rear are doors leading to the cellar, and there is a coal chute to the furnace room. The garage, which adjoins the playground in the rear, also is complete, and there is a shelter shed adjoining it. A brick ash pit is near the garage.

A gravel road leads from the garage outside the grounds, and the garage may only be entered through an ornamental iron gate. The fence surrounding the grounds is a work of art. There is a base of white wood, representing a cut-stone base, with cement and cobblestones above. It is surmounted with a cut-stone coping, and at short intervals there are decorative cut-stone posts with fancy caps.

One of the most intricate pieces of work on the entire model are the ornamental iron gates. There are seven of these, and each required more than a day's labor. Each picket is a separate piece of wood, and there are ornamental hinges and locks.

Van Zandt says the most difficult work on the whole model was the fitting of the small gratings in the basement windows. The piece composing the gratings are so small that it was almost impossible to get them glued into position. The glue set before the pieces could be put in place.

Van Zandt solved this problem by specially prepared glue to be used in this work so that it would not set so quickly. It required more than a day's time for each of the four gratings.

The first part of the house completed, he says, was one of the small windows which project from the roof above the second story, and the last thing completed was the knob on one of the gates.

Van Zandt is emphatic in his statement that the only tool used in the entire work was his penknife. Even the rounded pillars in the porches, he says, were made with the knife and were smoothed with a piece of sandpaper.

In 1913 he completed a model of the Centenary Church, Sixteenth and Pine Streets, on which he worked at odd times for twenty-one years. He says this model was made from observation, without the aid of a picture or drawing of any kind. He says he visited the church so many times while the work was in progress that people in the neighborhood commented on his presence.

Van Zandt also has a model of a beer wagon, which is similar to those he made for a brewery exhibit at the World's Fair in Chicago. A complete model of the brewery was shown at the fair, and Van Zandt says he undertook the work of making the wagon after numerous other men had attempted their manufacture and failed.

His work on the brewery exhibit required an entire winter. He made eighteen brewery wagons, thirty-four freight cars, and six trolley cars and trailers.

Funeral Held After Thirty-two Years.

Satisfied that the skeleton found on a sand bar in Red River, near Fulton, was that of their father, drowned thirty-two years ago, Ben and James Wilson brought it to their home in Texarkana, Ark., and had it interred in the family lot, after funeral ceremonies.

The body was found about three hundred yards below the point where Wilson perished in 1883. It had remained in the sand bar until shifting sands, during the recent overflow, left it partly exposed.

Collar Buttoning Made Easy.

A clever little thing in the way of a collar button is the invention of Charles Formage, of New Rochelle, N. Y. The button is an ordinary stud of solid metal, but has a tiny screw hole in its center. Into this a tapering peg is screwed. This goes through the buttonhole of a collar without any difficulty or breaking of nails or swearing on the part of the owner. When the collar is on, the peg is unscrewed and the button remains.

Gets Big Award for Injuries.

For the loss of two fingers and a thumb, Michael Wizloski, an employee of the Eastern Steel Company, in Pottsville, Pa., was awarded $10,043.93 by a jury. This is one of the largest verdicts ever given for an injury not attended by fatal results.

The jury, in its verdict, censured the company for negligence in not properly protecting the machinery which caused Wizloski's injury.

The Cossack a True Son of Mars.

Apprenticed to Mars at birth, as were the Spartans before them, the Cossacks, survivals from a young, non-industrial world, are the most picturesque fighters on Europe's battlefields. A frontier's folk like the people of our early West, a mixture of many adventurous elements, and constituting within their own country a class more distinctive than that of the American cowboy, they have finally been subdued to the needs of the great imperial government of Petrograd, taken over just as they were into its machinery, and preserved as a soldier caste. A wild, conquering, freebooting folk, the Cossacks have been brought within the fold of Russian civilization as soldiers, descendants of warriors and progenitors of generations of soldiers to meet the future needs of the Slav empire.

These Cossacks, in the leisure of national peace, conquered the vast empire of Siberia for Russia, and in each Russian war for the last hundred years have formed the czar's irresistible first-line strength.

The Cossacks are a people of the limitless steppes, a

people of close corporation, situated in Russia as a race apart, a soldier caste, their state a military organization, their connection with the great empire maintained through the imperial war department, the administration of their internal affairs practically in their own hands, and their privileges as a caste almost as pronounced as were those of the Spartan-soldier citizen, or more comparable to the soldier caste of the older Indian organization. The Cossacks came of the original Slav stock, but they were those Slavs who never bowed their heads beneath a yoke, foreign or domestic; who lived a free life on the borders of their race's civilization, wandering, fighting, buccaneer Slav tribes, who penetrated deeply into Tartar and Georgian lands, who lived by the hunt and by plunder, and who maintained themselves on the borders of Asia and Europe free of all serfdom.

These sturdy Russian wanderers assimilated many adventurous elements, took up among them many Tartars and Slavs, and so to-day the Cossack type is a more or less distinct one. The total Cossack population of Russia is more than 3,000,000. Some years ago they owned nearly 145,500,000 acres of land, of which 105,000,000 acres was arable and 9,400,000 forest land. This land is held by the Cossacks in community partition as a state reward for their military service. It will be seen that the Cossack holdings amount to about fifty acres for each man, woman, and child of the people. There is an admiring, half-envious Russian catchword about being as "free and as rich as a Cossack."

The Cossacks are the roughriders of Europe. As the cowboys of the American plains and gauchos of the pampas, the Cossacks are as intensely interesting, wild, free, plain folk who live in the saddle in the open places, and whose rough democracy is the expression of the same naïve, rudimentary culture as that of their new-world brothers in spirit. None of their members are allowed to starve, and none of them has succeeded in winning overmastering position through the laying up of great wealth.

The Cossack is favored by the state, and is a main prop of the state's authority. To be born a Cossack is to be born a soldier. Every Cossack bears the obligation of twenty years' military service. He enters into this service at the age of eighteen, spends three years in a preliminary Cossack division, next passes twelve years in active service, and spends his last five military years in the Cossack reserve. It is the picked men from his ranks who constitute the imperial guard, a body of the finest type of fighters, whom the czar can trust when he can trust no one else around him. These Cossack soldiers have been the greatest terror with which Russia has been able to threaten Europe. They have been the empire's most efficient internal police, and they have marched eastward to the Pacific and southward to the zones of British influence, conquering for the czar a vast domain.

Colt with Six Feet.

A colt with six feet was born on the farm of George E. Gano, near Frankfort, Kan. One extra foot grew from the knee and the other from the ankle of the other front foot. In other respects the animal is normal.

Town of Active Old "Boys."

Lewistown, Pa., has many aged citizens that are still in active life. Among their number are John Gantz, still laboring at ninety years of age; Obdiah Umberger, hearty at ninety; Reverend Andrew Spanogle, driving an auto at ninety-two years; Thomas Kennedy, laying brick at four-score years; William N. Hoffman, getting around like a boy at seventy-nine years and just as jolly.

Shah Is a Gem Plutocrat.

Should the Shah of Persia be deprived of his income, he would still be one of the richest persons in the world. He would only have to sell his ornaments, gems, and precious stones to become possessed of about $35,000,000.

Safe Use of Alcohol.

To promote the industrial and technical utilization of alcohol, the Russian ministry of finance has offered prizes totaling about $136,000 for the best inventions in this respect.

"Song of the Winds" Reveals His Past.

Music wafted back to the empty halls of the lost memory of Charles Fitzhugh McReigh, a Boston composer, the love of a devoted wife, a deserted home, and anxious friends the other night. Memoryless McReigh has been wandering about the country for months.

McReigh mysteriously disappeared from his home over six months ago. He returned the night of his disappearance from a musical gathering with his wife and a party of friends, shortly after midnight. The following morning he failed to come down to breakfast.

For several weeks the family had no word of his whereabouts. After a while Mrs. McReigh heard that a man answering to her husband's description had come under the observation of the police of several New England cities.

Detectives were appealed to, and, in the course of a month, traced the missing man to Norwalk, Conn., and discovered that while he appeared to be in perfect health, his mind was blank as to his whole previous existence. Nothing could be done to arouse him to his past personality.

The wife and family physician were summoned, but McReigh could not be made to recollect himself. Specialists were consulted at the time, and it was their judgment that he would never recover his mental balance. They suggested only one chance. If an idea, something that had been an absorbing part of his life, could be brought suddenly to his mind, the reaction might accomplish that for which they hoped.

McReigh went to Worcester, Mass., some weeks ago and registered at the largest hotel. Each night he would sit in the mezzanine balcony, intently watching the piano player, who was a fair young woman with beautiful blond hair. He sat there continuously and silently, always with a set look of wonderment as the music was unfolded under the deft touch of the little player.

The night McReigh recovered his reason was witnessed by several others who were sitting by him, listening to the music. The little pianist was playing, as usual, mostly soft, low music, that was soothing and restful, until she came to the last selection, "The Song of the Winds." As she came to the final measure, with the crash of falling trees and overturned homes, McReigh arose from his chair and staggered toward the piano, and in an instant the little player and McReigh were locked in arms' tight embrace.

There were just two words spoken—"Tom" and "Frances." Then the woman collapsed and McReigh had

to be carried away, his face an ashy color. Both were cared for by the house doctor.

It afterward developed that the little pianist was Mrs. McReigh. Acting on the advice of specialists, she had followed her memoryless husband from city to city. Being people of wealth, she was able to go at any length to accomplish her purpose.

McReigh was supplied with funds through the management of the different hotels at which he registered, without his knowledge, and the wife consented to pose as a musician in need of employment in order that she could be able to play in the presence of her husband. "The Song of the Winds" was McReigh's best-known and favorite composition. McReigh was under the watchful eye of his wife from the time of his discovery in Norwalk.

McReigh's memory was perfectly normal the following day, and man and wife returned to their home in Boston with plans for a second honeymoon through the West to celebrate the glad occasion.

Habit Saved His Life.

Habit saved George Lee, of Los Angeles, Cal., forty-five years old, recently, when he plotted against his life. He placed the muzzle of a revolver in his mouth, put his mind in order for the end, and was pulling the trigger, when he heard some one call, "Right!"

It was a word used more frequently than any other in his work in a downtown grocery. There Lee was accustomed to carry packages across a long room. Several persons were similarly occupied, and when they would meet, going in opposite directions, the one with a load on his shoulder would always cry, "Right!" The right hand of the other would go up in signal that he would observe the rules of the meeting, for the contents of the boxes were fragile, and any interference might cause a loss that would be deducted from their wages.

While his finger was drawing at the trigger, from outside came the clear call, "Right!" voiced by chance in the conversation of passers-by.

From habit, Lee's right hand started to lift in signal, the finger released the trigger, and the shell exploded, but the minor twitch that had come when he heard the word of warning switched the aim, so the bullet left a harmless wound in his cheek. Other persons heard the shot, hastened to the room, and rushed Lee off to the receiving hospital, where his wound was dressed, and his spirits revived by the promise that a job would be given him.

Has Relic of One Bald-headed Indian.

Bart J. Marrs, of Hailey, Idaho, has in his possession a valued keepsake in the shape of the scalp lock from the head of a forgotten Sioux chieftain.

Most relics of the long ago are valued from their intimate relationship to the forbears of their present-day owner. Particularly is this true when the relic symbolizes some event of momentous importance to the original possessor.

The trouble with many souvenirs of the misty past is that they may have been made but a few days ago in Chicago or in Connecticut and placed on the market, judiciously, of course, at so much per. With Judge Marrs' memento, however, is a family tradition which not only proves its authenticity but lends it an added interest.

Redskins who have seen the scalp of Oogley Moogley in the judge's home are perfectly satisfied that it is extremely bad medicine to attempt the rough stuff with members of the Marrs clan.

Old Oogley Moogley was at one time taken back East to hold converse with the Great White Father in behalf of his fellow tribesmen. At least, so runs the tradition.

While honoring the honorific city of Boston with his august copper-colored presence, he was made much of by the supercultured, hyphenated ladies of the hub of the universe. One lady, whose talents and inclinations lay in the direction of poesy and letters, was greatly impressed with the æsthetic suggestion conveyed by the name of "Oogley Moogley."

That gentleman's dignified bearing and his majestic manner of declaiming "Ugh!" on the slightest provocation were equally impressive and awe-inspiring.

The lady resolved to come to the Golden West, look up the antecedents of the famous chieftain, and trace his personal handle back to its philological root. This for the sweet sake of poesy.

It was only after an hour's converse with the oldest inhabitant, several futile calls on the Indian agent and the Catholic father of the post, that she learned from an educated Indian that "Oogley Moogley" was simply the warrior's distorted pronunciation of the epithet "Ugly Mug," bestowed upon him by the whites. Her dudgeon was up, likewise her dander, and she lost no time in leaving the post and traversing the waste places that lay on the road to Boston.

But Oogley came to an ignominious end. Several Sioux uprisings had taken place in his neighborhood within short periods. On one of his nocturnal prowls, peaceful or not it was never learned, Oogley ran up against the member of the Marrs family who put the Indian sign on him.

Advancing stealthily to the Marrs cabin, he put his head through a white man's window for the last time. It may have been that he was desirous only of obtaining a slice of New England pie, a strip of bacon, or begging the loan of a bit of chewing tobacco. The owner of the cabin didn't ask. He simply put his own construction on the act, drew his trusty bowie knife out of his boot, and grabbed Oogley's scalp lock in one hand; and one fell blow spelled "finis" for the affair. At the same time, future generations of the Marrs family were enriched by the acquisition of a relic that is a relic.

And Judge Marrs, in answer to the query made famous a few years ago by extensive advertising of a remedy for hairless-headed gentlemen, "Did you ever see a bald-headed Indian?" truthfully replies:

"No, but my granddaddy did."

Ingenious Anglers Work Great Scheme.

Because of an unpardonable oversight, Carl Selzer and Louis Gunther, anglers, of Grand Rapids, Mich., are lamenting the loss of a half dozen trained minnows which not only proved their contention that fish are susceptible to learning, but brought about an unparalleled catch of pickerel.

Selzer, who is an active secretary of the Y. M. C. A., and Gunther, a German professor, have fished the waters of the Michigan northlands for years. On a trip last fall, while strikes were lagging, they entered on a discussion as to the intellectual capabilities of a fish, and both

agreed that it would be as possible to educate them along certain lines as it would be to teach a dumb animal tricks. Each one had lost many a good fish because of its ability to eject a hook from its mouth after "falling for" the lure of a brilliant bait, and this point alone suggested the learning of the trick from some other fish of wider experience.

During the winter the discussion was revived, and Gunther and Selzer decided to work out their theory, if possible. They visited the State fish hatchery and procured a dozen minnows and placed them in a tank kept in the barn at the rear of Gunther's home. Into the tank they lowered a square cage made of small-meshed wire. From the start the minnows discovered that the meshes would admit the passage of their bodies, and they flitted through the cage freely in securing the bits of food which the two experimentalists artfully placed within.

After a few days a plan for frightening the minnows was introduced. Gunther dropped a large stone in one end of the tank. With the splash the minnows darted into the cage. When all was quiet again, they would venture forth, and, with another splash, caused by the dropping of the stone, they would flit back through the meshes. Soon they grew to realize that the wire cage was a haven of protection, and no matter what the method used by the two men to frighten them, they would always respond with a dash through the wires.

Several weeks ago Gunther and Selzer planned a week-end trip. They placed their trained minnows in a water container, packed up their appliances, and boxed the cage. Arriving at a northern lake in good season, they immediately rowed to a favorite pickerel "ground." Gunther held the cage just under the water, and Selzer placed the minnows within. Then it was lowered easily about ten feet and suspended. Both men then baited their hooks with other live minnows and dropped them to the depth of the cage and about five feet away. Inside of a half hour they had made a record catch. Their idea had worked as they planned that it should.

The minnows swam from the cage, investigating after their curious fashion, and attracted a number of voracious pickerel, but as soon as they caught sight of the big fish, for which they held a congenital fear, they darted back into the cage, realizing, by reason of past experiences, that it was their stronghold.

The pickerel, flashing up, struck their pointed snouts against the wires, and, like Tantalus, were repulsed. Then, their greed thoroughly aroused, they swam about for a few moments, gloating on the possibilities, until satisfied that a feast was impossible. As they turned to fin away, their eyes caught the minnows adorning the hooks lowered by the two fishermen. In an instant, acting on the belief that the minnows were a part of the school which had eluded them, they struck and were caught.

For nearly an hour Selzer and Gunther continued to pull in the big pikes, and when they decided the afternoon's sport was over, they had gathered a larger mess than they had ever caught before. That night they placed their trained minnows in a perforated can and hung it over the side of the wharf. Gunther, who attended to this duty, accidentally failed to lock the can. During the night, in some manner, the lid was raised, and the next morning it was discovered that the minnows had disappeared.

Both men firmly believe that some pickerel, piqued because of a failure in the afternoon to secure one of the minnows, followed the boat and negotiated the raising of the lid, and had successfully satisfied an aching appetite.

The incident cut the trip short, but the theory was proved, and Selzer and Gunther are now busy training another dozen minnows for future excursions.

Cow Puzzles Kentucky.

What is the State of Kentucky going to do with Alex Steve and his cow Fanny?

Steve is up against it. He was planning to make Fanny help him earn a living. He intended to start an ice-cream business, with her aid, up in Cannonsburg, Pa., where his daughter and four grandchildren live. And now the law says he must either sell Fanny or stay right where he is with the cow—that is, in a box car.

Steve was a miner in Dobra, W. Va., and one day, not long ago, he had one of his feet crushed in an accident and had to give up mining. So Steve decided to go to Cannonsburg to his daughter. He loaded his household goods into a box car, built Fanny a stall in one end, and set up his bed in the other end of the car. Besides Fanny, he had seven chickens in a box as traveling companions. He paid seventy-five dollars and sixty cents for transportation. That was nearly two weeks ago.

The C. & O. Railroad landed Steve and his outfit in Covington, Ky., and tried to turn over the car to the Pennsylvania line for the rest of the journey. The Pennsylvania Railroad officials refused to accept it, because Fanny was barred from entering the State of Pennsylvania by the foot-and-mouth-disease quarantine. No cow, no matter how healthy, can be taken in until the quarantine is lifted.

Steve and his outfit can't go on and can't go back to Dobra. They can't stay in Covington, because Steve has only thirteen cents to his name. The car contains a little feed for Fanny and a little cracked corn for the chickens. Steve has been living chiefly on the milk Fanny gave him and the schmierkäse he made from it, and occasionally some eggs from the chickens. Outside of that, he hasn't had much else to eat for several days.

Steve doesn't want to sell Fanny, for, if he does, the ice-cream business will be impossible, but if he must, he wants one hundred dollars for her. He says he paid seventy-five dollars for her six months ago and she now represents his only means of livelihood. He claims the railroad only wants to give him thirty dollars for Fanny. In the meantime he is still stranded with his cow and chickens in his freight-car home in the railroad yards in Covington, Ky.

Two Thousand Air Pilots Engaged in Western War Zone.

It is estimated that the total number of aëroplane pilots engaged in active service with the Germans and the Allies in France and Belgium is nearly two thousand. Fully five thousand pilots in uniform and new aviators are still far from the front. These include Italian aviators.

Comparatively few German aëroplanes are seen on the French front, probably for the reason that German pilots seldom accept battle with the French aëroplane, which they are sent in chase, but they promptly speed back to the German lines when pursued in their turn. Over the German lines they are protected by many types of efficient antiaircraft guns. These include an automatic gun, which shoots shells vertically more than ten thousand feet at the rate of thirty per minute.

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